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**THE RITUAL FUNCTIONS AND  
SIGNIFICANCE OF GRASSES IN THE  
RELIGION OF THE VEDA**

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# Contents

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Chapter	I	Introduction – 5
	II	Tṛṇa – 11
	III	Kuśa – 29
	IV	Darbha – 52
	V	Kuśa and darbha – 97
	VI	Dūrvā – 108
	VII	Muñja – 122
	VIII	Kāśa – 133
	IX	Other grasses – 135
	X	Barhis – 140
	A	In the Ṛgveda – 140
	B	In the Atharvaveda – 151
	C	In the Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā – 153
	D	In ritual practice – 155
	E	Ritualistic theory, effects, explanations, special uses, identifications – 183
	F	Terminological addenda – 194
	G	Uttarabarhis – 196
	XI	Prastara – 197
	XII	Veda – 217
	XIII	Kūrca – 232
	XIV	Bṛsī – 241

Abbreviations – 243

General Index – 245

Index of Sanskrit words – 252

Index of Sanskrit text-places – 258





## Introduction

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Much has been written on the religious significance of trees, on their being symbols of supernatural power or manifestations of the Holy, their vital force that enters into a peculiar relation to human life, their power to sustain – for instance, as May-poles or Easter branches adorned with fruits – the life and prosperity of a whole community, their function as life-bearers and saviours<sup>1</sup>. Gods and spirits are often believed to dwell in trees, their coalescence being confirmed in that the taking of a branch is supposed to bring pain to the deity<sup>2</sup>. A vegetation god is not infrequently represented as a tree, the Great Goddess often associated with a perennial plant, holy trees are in Christian countries and elsewhere connected with the names of saints. Symbolizing, by its vertical growth, the world tree, the axis of the cosmos, a tree is believed to be a means of reaching the sky and the heavenly regions by climbing it or its representative, a sacred pole<sup>3</sup>. It was no doubt their periodic regeneration, interpreted as a constantly repeated defeat of death, that made trees and other plants symbols of continued life<sup>4</sup>.

Plants, representing and manifesting the vital power of nature, spontaneous growth and continued life, have for various reasons, rightly or wrongly, been or are still regarded as beneficial or officinal, also as bearers of some divine or magic power<sup>5</sup>. Any form of contact with a great many of them has been, or is, supposed to transfer their inherent power to those human beings who are informed of their properties; they provide nourishment, restore to health, protect from visible and invisible evil and their young shoots bestow fresh energy and vitality. Thus flax and

1. See, e.g., F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 67 ff., with references, to which should now be added, *inter alia*, J. de Vries, *Keltische Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 187 ff.; M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris 1949 (= *Die Religionen und das Heilige*, Salzburg 1954; *Patterns in comparative religion*, New York 1958), ch. VIII (with a bibliography); Eliade, *Birth and rebirth*, New York 1958, *passim*; G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation*, London 1938, p. 55 ff.; as to India, O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954; B.C. Sinha, *Tree worship in ancient India*, New Delhi 1979.
2. See, e.g., W.Ch. Beane, *Myth, cult and symbols in Śākta Hinduism*, Leiden 1977, p. 57.
3. See, e.g., M. Eliade, *Images et symboles*, Paris 1952, p. 55 ff.; 213 ff.; *Birth and rebirth*, p. 119 f.; J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, Utrecht 1954, <sup>2</sup>Delhi 1969, p. 81 ff.
4. For the tree of life see also H. Bergema, *De boom des levens in schrift en historie*, Thesis Amsterdam V.U. 1938.
5. For a survey of facts and references etc. Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 73 ff.; J.J. Meyer, *Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation*, Zürich and Leipzig 1937.

other plants were in ancient Greece and Rome, and are in popular belief, means of warding off demons<sup>6</sup>. The wreath, a bearer of green and flowering or blossoming twigs, was, for instance, in Greece worn by sacrificers and by those participating in such solemn or ceremonious occasions as weddings; also in ancient India it was worn for prosperity, and together with fruits, grain etc. used for purificatory purposes<sup>7</sup>. The well-known scattering of seeds on a bridal couple is to make the newly married pair participate in the fecundity and productiveness of the plants. In Christianity olive branches symbolize the heavenly unction<sup>8</sup>, the ear of corn the Resurrection. And so on, and so on.

Indian authorities never tire of urging the necessity for worshipping the deity with "fruits, flowers and leaves fresh and readily available" (e.g. ŚivaPur., RudraS. 2, 15, 26), with "kuśa grass, flowers and sacrificial twigs" (ibid., 3, 13, 46) or with a handful of *dūrvā* grass (ibid., 4, 18, 44). Those who wish to consecrate and install a material representation of Viṣṇu or Rudra should make an image by means of *aśvattha* or *palāśa* leaves, sprouts of *dūrvā* grass, barley and gold and sprinkle it; thereupon they should throw on the pedestal *dūrvā* sprouts, flowers, fruit, unhusked barley-corns<sup>9</sup>. Various puppets of popular deities made of grass or straw are led about in procession as the central figures of religious festivities<sup>10</sup>. Amulets and talismans used for protection, conciliation of deities etc. were or are often made of wood of auspicious trees, beneficial plants, rice, mustard seed<sup>11</sup>, sometimes also of a piece of gold fastened to *kuśa* grass (ŚŚ. 3, 19, 9; cf. ŚB. 12, 4, 4, 6). A girdle prepared of *sara* grass, which is (represents) vigour or strength (*ūrj*), enables the one who wears it to obtain these conditions (TS. 6, 1, 3, 3 f.). Grass used for sacrificial purposes should have young shoots that the one who uses it may become prosperous (BhŚ. 8, 1, 13; ĀpŚ. 8, 1, 10; TB. 1, 6, 3, 2). The vital power inherent in grasses, which are a part or constituent element of nature, brings the one who uses or wears them or has them ritually spread<sup>12</sup> into contact with nature's energy and vitality, transfers it to him, makes him participate in it, purifies, wards off evil, or makes a place, a rite or other event auspicious<sup>13</sup>. The Vedic ritualists, basing their injunctions, descriptions and arguments on this traditional belief, extended, developed

6. See, e.g., J. de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, II, Leiden 1937, p. 41 and compare also X.F.M.G. Wolters, *Notes on antique folklore*, Thesis Utrecht 1935, p. 133.

7. L. Deubner, *Die Bedeutung des Kranzes im klassischen Altertum*, *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft* 30, p. 70 ff.; G. Burkert, *Griechische Religion*, Stuttgart 1977, p. 502, s.v.; J. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, Leiden 1980, p. 122. For flowers put on one's head see, e.g., *LiP.* 2, 4, 10.

8. Heiler, *op. cit.*, p. 68.

9. Thus the non-Vedic instructions in *BGŚ.* 2, 13, 1; 2, 16, 2.

10. See, e.g., *BhavPur.* 117, 37 ff. and Meyer, *op. cit.*, I, p. 186; II, p. 163; 165; 246.

11. For a survey see Viennot, *op. cit.*, p. 62 ff. (mainly drawing on *AVŚ.* and *Kaus.*); compare, e.g., also post-Vedic places such as *Varāhamihira*, *BS.* 44, 5.

12. For instance, to tread on them as in the marriage ceremony described in *VaikhG.* 3, 4: bridegroom and bride tread on blades of grass "for food, for strength, etc.". Or in order to place the animal victim on them (*AiB.* 2, 11, 6).

13. "Zu den kanaanäischen Kultplätzen gehörten auch Bäume. Der grüne Baum war in einem baumarmen Land wie Palästina ein selbstverständliches Symbol des Lebens und der Fruchtbarkeit; deshalb lag der Kultplatz entweder in einem Hain oder stand auf der Kulthöhe ein Baum ..." (H. Ringgren, *Israelitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 142 f.). For the combination stone, tree, altar constituting an "effective microcosmos" see Eliade, *Traité*, § 95.

and elaborated, especially in the brāhmaṇas and śrautasūtras, numerous ritual practices long since in existence, created new ones of the same or similar type and more or less successfully tried to systematize and motivate them in accordance with their philosophy, ritual theory and views of natural processes and phenomena.

In order to exemplify the methods of teaching and reasoning of the ritualists an excursus may be inserted here on those stalks of grass that are used as so-called *vidhṛtī* (dual). The word *vidhṛtī* means "separation, division, partition". Sun and moon, earth and sky are *vidhṛta*, i.e. they stand apart (ŚB. 14, 6, 8, 9; BĀU. 3, 8, 9). The nose is a *vidhṛtī* between the two eyes (ŚB. 10, 5, 2, 9), the navel a *vidhṛtī* between the upper and lower vital functions (ŚB. 1, 3, 6). Since the drops of fat of the victim that is being immolated should be produced separately (TS. 6, 3, 9, 5), the officiant is enjoined to throw a stalk of grass (*tṛṇa*) under the fat in order to keep the drops separated (*stokānāṃ vidhṛtyai*, MS. 3, 10, 1: 130, 1)<sup>14</sup>. An object intended to fulfil some function is regarded as a bearer of a particular power: a lump of earth by which a separation is brought about is requested to keep apart, i.e. to keep off (*vidhāraya*), evil and enmity from those pronouncing a relevant formula (TĀ. 6, 9, 2). If one offers particular ladlefuls of ghee in separate libations, one makes a distinction between the vital powers and the limbs (of the same body, ŚB. 9, 2, 2, 6). The officiant (*adhvaryu*) who is preparing the *vedi* (the sacrificial bed covered with grass) takes two blades of *darbha* grass of the same length that have no inner shoot from the *barhis* (sacrificial grass) and places them in the middle of the *vedi* with their ends pointing towards the north<sup>15</sup>; on these *vidhṛtis* he places the *prastara* (grass tied in a bundle), which represents the "sacrificer" (patron of the sacrifice), and on the *prastara* the offering ladles (BhŚ. 2, 9, 9 ff.; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 12 f.; see also BŚ. 5, 6: 135, 11; ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 10 ff.; KŚ. 2, 8, 5 f.). *Prastara* and *barhis* are now kept separate. The sacrificial area being the place where the expert officiant by means of apposite mantras and manual rites manipulates, for the benefit of the 'sacrificer' (the one who has the rites performed), the unseen powers and exerts influence on the social and natural processes and phenomena, the accompanying mantra informs us that these *vidhṛtis* have not only their above pragmatic function but are also to fulfil a 'symbolic' function: they will enable the (noble) sacrificer to restrain the common people (TB. 3, 3, 6, 10 calling them *yantre*). The mantra prescribed in ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 10 states that they are put down for the sake of separating (*vidhṛtyai*) nobility and the common people and that for this reason they are called *vidhṛtī* and are placed transversely (across the grass that covers the *vedi*)<sup>16</sup>. However, elements of a symbolic system have the capacity to accumulate meanings, that is, they are apt to be reinterpreted, liable to be understood in more than one way. Being means of restraining the (common) people the *vidhṛtis* enable according to TB. 3, 7, 6, 7 f. the sacrificer to destroy his rivals so that he shall be at the head

14. The term *vidhṛtī* is also applied to other things, e.g. PB. 24, 11, 4 to rites performed over-night separating certain days.

15. They have to fulfil exactly the same function, are non-productive and are laid in the auspicious direction in which sacrifices are performed (ŚB. 3, 4, 3, 19; cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 53).

16. The Maitrāyaṇīyas (MS. 1, 1, 12: 7, 16; MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 12; VārŚ.) prescribe the mantra "ye two are the division of all men". - For other particulars see ch. XI.

of his people; being goddesses seated in the world of religious merit (*sukṛtasya loke*)<sup>17</sup> and driving away malignity, every evil, and indigence, they are not only *vidhṛtī*, but also *dhr̥tī* (supports) and *svadhṛtī* (spontaneous supporters) and are besought to support the vital functions as well as offspring and cattle of the person addressing them. These statements and prayers are to be pronounced by the sacrificer, when the *adhvaryu* places the *vidhṛtis* on the *vedī* (see above, BhŚ. 4, 9, 3; ĀpŚ. 4, 6, 5). On the other hand, since the *prastara* is supposed to represent the top-knot of the sacrifice (ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 7; 1, 3, 4, 10) and the *barhis* the beard and other hair below that (1, 3, 3, 7), the *vidhṛtī*, being placed transversely, can be taken to correspond to the eye-brows (cf. 1, 3, 4, 10). It may be noticed that on the occasion of an animal sacrifice (ŚB. 3, 6, 3, 10; ĀpŚ. 7, 7, 7) and of the so-called guest-offering (the rite for the reception of the *soma* stalks, ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 18; KŚ. 8, 1, 14) the *vidhṛtis* should consist of two stalks of sugar-cane. No motivation is added, but this sweet plant is, in magic, a means of conciliating other people (cf. AVŚ. 1, 34<sup>18</sup>). Since however the *paridhis* (the three sticks enclosing the *āhavanīya* (oblatory) fire) and the *prastara* should for special reasons – to ward off the demons and so on (ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 16 f.; TS. 6, 2, 1, 5 f.) – be made of other material, conciliation of the victim (cf., e.g., ŚB. 3, 7, 3, 4 f.) or of the *soma* stalks may be the motive here also. In TS., 1. cit. these *paridhis* are made an element of the Prajāpati doctrine: the (horizontal) eyelids of the Creator consist of sugar-cane. In the case of the sacrifice to the Fathers (*sāka-medha* ritual) no *vidhṛtis* are laid down (ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 16; ĀpŚ. 8, 14, 8), because the Fathers have departed once for all (ŚB.).

Already in former centuries the profuse ritual use the Indians made of grasses and other plants in worshipping their gods did not escape the observation of foreigners visiting their country<sup>19</sup>. In view of the almost innumerable references to grasses in the brāhmaṇa and sūtra literature and of the fact that already in the R̥gveda the indispensability of the grass covering (*barhis*) of the sacrificial place is emphasized – Agni is the protector charged with the oral ritual, the pressing-stones and the *barhis* are responsible for the performance of the manual rites (8, 27, 1) – it is not surprising that this characteristic of the Vedic sacrificial cult attracted the attention of authors on Vedic religion<sup>20</sup>. However, this attention was mainly focussed on the *barhis* and more than once especially on the fact that grass and twigs were also used in the cult of the ancient Iranians<sup>21</sup>. After ascertaining traces of the employment of grass or straw in the ritual of other Indo-European peoples (Greeks,

17. For this expression see J. Gonda, *Loka*, Amsterdam Acad. 1966, p. 115; 130; 142.

18. With the notes by W.D. Whitney and Ch.R. Lanman, *Atharva-veda Samhitā*, Cambridge Mass. 1905, p. 34 f.

19. See, e.g., B. Ziegenbalg (1683–1719), *Malabarisches Heidenthum*, herausgegeben ... von W. Caland, Amsterdam Acad. 1926, p. 97 f.; W. Caland, *Twee oude Fransche verhandelingen over het Hindoeïsme*, Amsterdam Acad. 1923, p. 159; 162.

20. See, e.g., H. Oldenberg, *Die Religion des Veda*, Stuttgart und Berlin, 1923, p. 342 ff.; A.A. Macdonell, *Vedic mythology*, Strassburg 1897, p. 154; H.D. Griswold, *The religion of the R̥gveda*, Oxford 1923, p. 158 f.; 321; A.B. Keith, *The religion and philosophy of the Veda and Upanishads*, Cambridge Mass. 1925, p. 34; 286; K.R. Potdar, *Sacrifice in the R̥gveda*, Bombay 1953, p. 74.

21. See, e.g., also H. von Glasenapp, *Die Religionen Indiens*, Stuttgart 1943, p. 54.

Romans<sup>22</sup>, Slavs etc.) L. von Schroeder<sup>23</sup> tried to show that the sacrificial straw or a carpet of grass or grasslike plants was already in the religion of the original Indo-Europeans spread on the place to which the worshippers invited their gods<sup>24</sup>.

However, in spite of, and also because of, this onesided historical, or rather prehistoric, interest in one of the ritual uses of grasses in Indian antiquity, a monograph on this subject and a discussion of the various uses and religious significance of gramineae in Vedic ritual has, as far as I am able to see, not yet been published. That is why I purpose, in this book, a survey of the main relevant facts and, without aiming at completeness of finality, of the ritual uses and functions of the main grasses distinguished by the ancient ritualists. I shall focus attention first and foremost on those points which, I think, are of special interest to philologists and students of Indian and comparative religion, that is to say, on the interpretation of texts and the explanation of rites and myths<sup>25</sup>. Since, however, the ritual use and religious significance of these plants cannot always be dissociated from their employment as utilitarian material<sup>26</sup> – which, at least in some technical respects, is its natural basis – I shall have to discuss also some references to techniques of processing grasses in daily life.

It is indeed not surprising that grass, being multifunctional, should have been used also for various profane purposes. Owing to the character of our sources, references are comparatively rare, however. This is regrettable, because a complete acquaintance with the non-ritual and non-religious uses could doubtless elucidate some statements made in the texts in connexion with its ritual functions and significance. It seems nevertheless possible to regard some ritual employments of grass or relevant instructions found in the ritual manuals as special cases of common or daily practices. In ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 1 it is stated that the pot into which sour curds, honey and ghee have been poured together should be covered with a handful of *darbha* grass. (Likewise in the domestic ritual described at ĀgnG. 2, 6, 6: 101, 4). When one has, for a ritual purpose, sown barley grain, one covers it with *darbha* in order to protect it from (the sun and) desiccation (13, 8, 3, 13). Butter should be taken up by means of two clusters of *darbha* blades (BhŚ. 10, 4, 8; ĀpŚ. 10, 6, 11). Part of a mixture of sour milk and a particular powder is taken out of a vessel with a *darbha* sprout (ĀpŚ. 12, 24, 5). The wooden sword is wiped off or swept clean by means of *darbha* (ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 1). If a consecrated sacrificer has to go out on a journey, he should halt for grass and water (*tṛṇodakāya*) for the bullocks (BŚ. 6, 9: 165, 14: this action, though prescribed, should be performed without a mantra). If the pa-

22. See also H. Wagenvoort, *Roman dynamism*, Oxford 1947, p. 28; cf. also p. 19; 198.

23. L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, II, Leipzig 1916, p. 312. See also *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, herausgegeben von H. Bächtold-Stäubli, Berlin 1927–1942, VII, p. 408 ff.

24. For vertical altars made of bamboo and leaves used by many mountain-tribes of Assam see Chr. von Fürer-Haimendorf, in *Die Religionen Indiens*, III, Stuttgart 1964, p. 278.

25. Their mythology was to provide the ancients with a possibly consistent conceptualization of their ritual and social order. Almost all customary acts traced their origin and maintained their credit in what was believed to be real events that, having come to pass in the beginning, established them as elements of that order.

26. See also J.M. Adams, *Style in Southeast Asian materials processing*, in H. Lechtman and R. Merrill, *Material Culture*, St. Paul 1977, p. 47.



tron of the sacrifice should give a chariot yoked with horses, he (or another person) should sweep the horse mouths clean with a handful of *darbha* grass (LŚ. 2, 7, 20; DŚ. 5, 3, 23). It is hardly conceivable that such natural and uncomplicated actions, precautions or technical devices were no everyday occurrences. On the other hand, it is interesting to see that the ritualists deemed it right to mention and prescribe them in their manuals.

It should be borne in mind that, although it is comparatively easy to recognize members of the large family of the gramineae – there are about 5000 species known – their great complexity, the uniformity of their extremely reduced flowers and other particulars render classification very difficult. A superficial similarity does not necessarily indicate close relationship<sup>27</sup>. There does not yet exist a classification system on which all botanists agree and most of the grasses discussed in the following pages are given more than one scientific name. Besides, the ancient Indian ritualists were no more than the European authors of Sanskrit dictionaries and commentaries botanists. Their terminology was not based on scientific determination of distinctive factors; in giving the grasses under discussion names community of outward appearance (colour, length etc.) or usefulness for the same or similar purposes could easily prevail over biological characteristics. These considerations may explain why the subject-matter of the several chapters of the present publication is made to accord with the Vedic nomenclature, however probable it may be that sometimes different plants were given the same name and the same plants different names.

27. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Chicago 1970, X, p. 700.

## II

### Tr̥ṇa

The neuter noun *tr̥ṇa* was in the Vedic period a common and general<sup>1</sup> term for grass, any gramineous plant<sup>2</sup>, a blade of grass or (blade of) straw. (Cf. AVŚ. 11, 7, 21; AVP. 16, 84, 1; ChU. 7, 2, 1; 7, 7, 1; 7, 8, 1; 7, 10, 1). Being uncultivated it was “increased by rain” (AVS. 6, 54, 1; AVP. 19, 8, 4), shaken off, cut off or blown away by the wind (AVŚ. 2, 30, 1; 6, 102, 2; AVP. 2, 17, 1; 2, 78, 1; 9, 25, 13; 19, 14, 2; 19, 19, 10; ĀpDh. 1, 11, 8), also exposed to (forest-)fire (RV. 3, 29, 6; AVP. 10, 2, 10; 19, 26, 12), and liable to become withered (KS. 11, 3: 147, 7; AVPar. 50, 9, 3)<sup>3</sup>. In daily life, *tr̥ṇa* was no doubt often used for profane purposes. It was as food grazed by and supplied to cows, horses and other animals<sup>4</sup> (cf. RV. 1, 162, 8; VS. 25, 31; TS. 4, 6, 8, 3 h; MS. 3, 16, 1: 182, 11 etc.; RV. 1, 164, 40; AVŚ. 7, 73, 11; 9, 10, 20; AVP. 16, 69, 10; 20, 11, 4; RV. 10, 102, 10; AVŚ. 9, 8, 22; AVP. 16, 139, 23; 5, 20, 8; PB. 6, 7, 19; AVPar. 71, 5, 2 (see also 70 b, 23, 10); ĀpŚ. 20, 2, 11; VaikhG. 2, 16: 34, 1; BĀU. 1, 4, 16 and cf. also AVP. 1, 87, 2).

If Whitney’s translation<sup>5</sup> of *prāṇāhasya tr̥ṇasya* in AVŚ. 9, 3, 4; AVP. 16, 39, 5, viz. “binding grass” is correct, *tr̥ṇa* was – as might be expected – also employed as a cord, or as a means of fastening things together. However, in ŚB. 3, 7, 3, 8 this function is only symbolical and therefore ritual: after dissuading those concerned from binding the animal victim the author enjoins them to drive it up with (a blade) of grass (or straw). – The cords with which the sticks used for kindling the fire are bound together are called *saṃmārgāḥ* (e.g. ĀpŚ. 2, 15, 4; 4, 11, 6; ĀśvŚ. 3, 1, 13). They obviously derive their name from the fact that they are also, and primarily, used for cleaning (see below as well as the comm. on KŚ. 2, 6, 46 f. and the comm. on ĀśvŚ. 1, 3, 28). The compound *saṃmārgatr̥ṇaiḥ* occurs in ĀśvŚ. 1, 3, 28: with these

1. Cf. Pāṇini, 2, 4, 12 *vr̥kṣamrgatr̥ṇa* ... “words for trees, forest animals, grasses (just like Engl. *grass* “any wild, green, low-growing herbage”) ...”
2. Inclusive of edible gramīna such as wild millet and wild sesame (BDh. 3, 2, 18). – Hence also explanations such as *kāśākyatr̥ṇakusumāni* (Mallinātha, on Kāl. Ragh. 4, 17). That grass was regarded as a sort *ośadhi* appears for instance from TS. 3, 3, 8, 3 ordering the patron of the sacrifice to burn at the end of the sacrifice, the plants (*ośadhi*) which he has strewn on the *vedi*; these plants are grass (ĀpŚ. 13, 24, 15). – In the Pali Jātaka I, p. 190 *kusa* being eaten by an elephant is explained by *tina* (*tr̥ṇa*, comm.).
3. For *tr̥ṇa* in a simile see, e.g., ŚB. 14, 7, 2, 4 (BĀU. 4, 4, 3).
4. As to the man who, being under a ritual obligation, has to eat grass see JB. 2, 113; ĀpŚ. 22, 13, 2.
5. See W.D. Whitney and Ch.R. Lanman, Atharva-veda Saṃhitā, Cambridge Mass. 1905, p. 526.

wisps of grass for tying faggots together (but now not in this function, comm.) the *hotar* should wipe off his mouth with the formula “thou art a *sammārga*, rub (*sam mṛddhi*) with offspring and cattle”. (In ĀpŚ. 24, 12, 10 this officiant has to shake the strings for fastening fuel together (*idhmasamnahānāni*<sup>6</sup>) before his face).

From AVŚ. 9, 3, 17; AVP. 16, 40, 7 “enveloped in grass (*tṛṇaiḥ*), clothed in bundles of straw or reeds for wainscoting etc. (a probable translation of *palada*)”, AVŚ. 3, 12, 5; AVP. 3, 20, 5, where the genius of the house, addressed as mistress, is said to clothe herself in *tṛṇa* and AVP. 7, 6, 9, where the divine hall or house is described as doing likewise, it may be inferred that *tṛṇa* was used as “building-materials” and perhaps also that ordinary clothes could sometimes be made of it<sup>7</sup>. Inside the house it did duty for a seat or couch (ViDh. 50, 4) and should therefore, just as fire and water, not fail in the dwelling of men who live up to the recognized standard (VāsDh. 13, 61). It should be offered to a guest (AiB. 8, 24, 6; GautDh. 5, 35; Manu 3, 101; cf. ĀpDh. 2, 4, 14). In this case it has a function in connexion with an Aryan’s social behaviour. In our eyes, not in his, the author of KauṣU. 2, 15 crosses a borderline: when a dying father wishes to bequeath his various powers to his son he strews his house with new grass, builds up his fire and places near it a vessel of water: here a customary practice assumes the character of a rite. Notice that the grass is not specified. – With reference to its use as a place to sit upon the authors (e.g. JB. 1, 338 *tṛṇebhyo ’nūltasthau*) describe a social situation or a ceremonious sitting down (ĀśvŚ. 8, 14, 13 f. “the teacher should sit down behind the fire *tṛṇesu* (of which the tips are turned eastward, comm), the pupil behind the teacher likewise *tṛṇesu*”).

It is easily conceivable that in daily practice a tuft of grass was used as a sweeping-brush or as an implement for cleaning (cf. ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 11 with the comm.; TB. 3, 3, 1, 2; 5). (The *veda*, the broom employed for sweeping the *vedi*, is made of *darbha* grass (BhŚ. 1, 6, 4; ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 4)). Nor is it surprising that in the Veda *tṛṇa* occurs as a means of wiping out or counteracting the effects or consequences of evil deeds (AVP. 9, 22, 27), or is used to keep a person who, being in company with unclean people, is seated on it pure (ĀpDh. 1, 15, 14; cf. 13). Grass is on the other hand one of the many articles that are cleansed by sprinkling water over them when they have been defiled (ViDh. 23, 16).

For *tṛṇa* as a ‘symbolical’ partition or barrier see MS. 3, 8, 6: 102, 5 dealing with the *prastara* that represents the noble sacrificer and the *barhis* representing his *prajāḥ*.

At the beginning of the section on the construction of the *vedi* (sacrificial bed) the author of BhŚ. 2, 1, 1 enjoins the *adhvaryu* to “sharpen” (*samśyati*) the wooden sword by means of a *tṛṇa*. Although a translation “prepare” would be possible we must regard this act as symbolical, because the wooden sword represents Indra’s *vajra*; when it is taken up, it is raised against the patron’s rival (see ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 1 ff. and TS. 2, 6, 4, 1 “with ‘... thou art a slayer of the hostile one’ he sharpens the *vajra*”). The *tṛṇa* is no doubt a very suitable instrument because of its inherent

6. See p. 23 below.

7. Cf. R. Gopal, India of the kalpasūtras, Delhi 1959, p. 156 ff.



properties just as in ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 7 a mantra addressed to the sharp-edged Vāyu is used for the same purpose.

From BhŚ. 9, 13, 9 and ĀpŚ. 9, 9, 12 (mentioning also firewood and cowdung) as well as ChU. 6, 7, 5 it appears that grass, or rather straw, was used to make a fire blaze up. See also ŚBK. 1, 2, 2, 8; ŚBM. 2, 2, 2, 13 (where *trṇāni dāha*, *dārūṇi dāha* in order to cook pap etc. was translated by Eggeling “eat grass”); ŚBM. 2, 4, 1, 8 f.; 13; ŚBK. 1, 4, 2, 4. For straw and wood as fuel also MaiU. 6, 26<sup>8</sup>. Grass could also serve as a match or a small torch (*abhidgotana*, BŚ. 3, 5: 73, 10)<sup>9</sup>. Those who are present at a cremation go ahead with a firebrand (a stick of *palāsa*) that has been lighted on the *gārhapatya* fire by means of *trṇāni* (BhP. 1, 2, 6). The agnihotra milk should be illuminated with a lighted (blade or tuft of) grass (*trṇenāvajyotyā*, KŚ. 4, 14, 5; *trṇena jvalatā*, ĀpŚ. 6, 6, 6<sup>10</sup>, *trṇam pradīpya*, HŚ. 3, 7, 30: 343). This milk being put on fire is illuminated in order to know when it is boiling (ŚB. 2, 3, 1, 16): no doubt in itself a non-ritual action. But it is also believed to have a ritual function or an esoteric significance: according to ŚB. 11, 6, 1, 10 the one who illuminates this milk with a *trṇa* gains the (useful) plants (*oṣadhi*) and conquers the “world” (*loka*) of the plants; according to JB. 1, 7 he collects by means of the *trṇa* in the oblation the sap (*ūrj*, also “vigour”) with which the sun after setting has entered the useful plants<sup>11</sup>. The author of VādhS. 3, 24, consistently recognizing the principle of *similia similibus*, is of the opinion that one collects the sun from the plants (*oṣadhi*), and states interestingly that the milk is to be illuminated by means of (burning) plants (*oṣadhi*)<sup>12</sup>.

Occasionally a blade of grass may represent fire. After having stated that the concluding bath should be performed standing and in the water the author of ĀpŚ. 8, 7, 28 f. describing the *varuṇapraghāsa* ritual<sup>13</sup> enjoins the *adhvaryu* to throw a blade of grass into the water and pour out an oblation of clarified butter on it. If however there is already such a blade on the water, he should make the offering on it. Such an offering is mentioned in TS. 6, 6, 3, 2: “He makes offering over the *barhis* in order to bring about a firm foundation for the oblations; verily also he offers in what has fire (*agnivati juhoti*)”. See also MS. 4, 8, 5: 112, 14 *trṇam prāsya juhoty agnimaty eva juhoty āyatanavati* (“on the right place”). As is well known, “there is a fire in every (piece of) wood” (ŚB. 12, 4, 3, 1).

In a section on the sacrifices belonging to the concluding bath (*avabhr̥tha*) of a soma sacrifice KS. 29, 3: 171, 5 mentions a sprinkling of ghee in the direction of

8. With J.A.B. van Buitenen's note, The Maitrāyaṇīya Upaniṣad, 's-Gravenhage 1962, p. 145.

9. MŚ. 1, 6, 1, 17 prescribes the use of a piece of burning charcoal (a firebrand, *ulmuka*); ŚŚ. 2, 8, 3 mentions the kindling of a piece of firewood (*samidh*).

10. I would not translate *trṇenābhijvālyā* in BhŚ. 6, 10, 10 by “with a lighted *darbha*-blade” (Kashikar; see also 14, 22, 1). Is *darbhatrṇābhyām* in the similar passage ĀgnG. 1, 1, 1: 3, 21 a dvandva or a karmadhāraya?

11. For *trṇa* and *oṣadhi* see below.

12. Compare H.S. Harrison, Fire-making, fuel, and lighting, in C. Singer et alii, A history of technology, Oxford 1954, p. 216 ff.; R.F. Heizer, Domestic fuel in primitive society, J.R. Anthropol. Inst. 93 (1963), p. 186 ff.

13. I refer to J. Gonda, The concluding bath of the *varuṇapraghāsa*, in Selected studies on ritual in the Indian religions, Supplement to Numen 45 (Volume D.J. Hoens), Leiden 1983, p. 1 ff.

*tṛṇa* or wood, if the officiant happens to see these (*yatra tṛṇam vā dāru vā paśyēt, tat pratyāghārayed agnimaty eva juhōti*). Then he offers “beyond” the fire – but we may add, in a substitute for the fire – for the sake of welfare or success (*saṃyaddhi*). – When one takes the water made into an oblation and sprinkled with ghee one makes an oblation beyond the fire, on the regular place, if one has previously thrown down *tṛṇa* (MS. 4, 5, 2: 65, 1; cf. TS. 6, 4, 3, 3 f.; ŚB. 3, 9, 3, 31 f.).

Cases in which a layer of *tṛṇa* provides protection are not lacking. When the *vedi* is being prepared the officiant puts a grass-bush (*tṛṇam*) between the wooden sword which he is to fling at the *vedi* and that piece of ground whilst pronouncing the words “lest I should injure the earth with this sharp thunderbolt” (KŚ. 2, 6, 15; ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 15) or with “thou art the defensive armour of the earth” (VSK. 1, 9, 2; ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 5): no doubt a ritual application of a secular technique (this is also apparent from the injunction that the top of the grass should point northwards, that is, to an auspicious quarter). On the victim that is to be immolated (animal sacrifice) the *adhvaryu* puts a stalk of grass with the formula “O plant (*ośadhe*), protect” (KŚ. 6, 6, 8; ŚB. 3, 8, 2, 12, see also 13 ff.). See also VārŚ. 1, 6, 5, 21. – When the patron of a sacrifice is shaved a blade of grass – elsewhere also denoted by the words *kuśa*, *barhis*, *darbha*<sup>14</sup> – is placed between the razor and the hair to afford protection (“in order to avoid hurting him”, MS. 3, 6, 2: 61, 5); see also VārŚ. 3, 2, 1, 18. According to JG. 1, 3: 4, 10 one may in cutting off the portions of the sacrificial substance use a bunch of grass (*tṛṇakūrca*) or one’s forefinger instead of one’s thumb and two fingers.

After observing that an oblation that trickles away is spilt the author of MS. 3, 9, 7: 126, 15 states that one throws *tṛṇa* under it in order to prevent it from being spilt. In a similar passage (TS. 6, 3, 8, 2 f.) it reads: “‘Guard from contact with the earth’, with these words he casts down (the) *barhis*, that (nothing) may be spilt ...”<sup>15</sup>. See also MS. 3, 10, 2: 130, 1 “he throws *tṛṇa* under it in order to restrain (*vidhrītyai*) the drops from (reaching the ground)”.

The question may arise, whether the poet of RV. 1, 162, 8 ff. expressing the wish that any part of the sacrificial horse should after the immolation reach the gods (st. 11, and “not attach itself to the ground, to the grasses”) has in mind the grass that grows on the earth or the plucked grass laid under the victim (cf. Sāyaṇa: *tṛṇeṣu: viśasanasamayē darbheṣu*; cf. Mahīdhara on VS. 25, 34; also KS. 5, 6, 4: 177, 18; MS. 3, 16, 1: 183, 1).

If the execution of a task in the open, irrespective of whether it is a secular or religious affair, requires the placing of an object on the bare ground one should see to it that no stalk of grass is left or put between (KŚ. 9, 2, 18; ŚBM. 4, 2, 4, 13; 14; 15; 24; ŚBK. 5, 2, 4, 13; also KB. 6, 14 (6, 9, 9); GB. 2, 1, 2: 145, 11 *vyūhya tṛṇāmi*). This was no doubt one of those situations that made people very well aware of the small size and value of grass: “there is not in him so much sin (evil, *enas*) as the point of a blade of grass” (ŚB. 5, 1, 2, 18). Accordingly, the fine inflicted on the man who cuts grass is the lowest possible (ViDh. 5, 58). However, it is not

14. Cf. J. Gonda, Vedic ritual, Leiden 1980, p. 91; for particulars see ch. III, IV, X below.

15. Cf. also p. 36 etc. below.

worthless: the man who steals it is put on a par with the thief of firewood etc. (52, 9). The man who is about to beat the soma with the pressing-stone should think that he strikes an enemy lest he should incur the guilt of killing the god Soma; if he hates no one, he may think of a blade of grass in order to be free from guilt (ŚB. 3, 9, 4, 17). Here again grass serves as a substitute.

Grass did not escape the notice of those authorities who from the point of view of their religious and ritual doctrines laid down the rules of conduct in the sphere of commerce and economy. From ĀpDh. 1, 21, 2 and BDh. 2, 1, 28 it appears that in their opinion grass – Āp. § 1 specifies: *muñja* and *balbaja* – and wood might at least in their natural state be sold, although one should not be too eager after such a livelihood. In this respect these plants are put on a par with such edible articles as roots and fruits (Āp. 1) and contrast with, e.g., sesame, which belongs to and represents (B. 27) the Fathers<sup>16</sup>, and rice, which is one's own indispensable food (cf. B. 27). A *snātaka* (the student who having finished his studies etc. returns home), who is subject to many taboos<sup>17</sup>, "shall avoid cutting grass and crushing clods of earth without a particular reason" (ĀpDh. 1, 32, 28; ViSm. 71, 42 f.; Manu, 4, 70 f.), lest he should "go soon to perdition" (Manu). Kullūka on Manu refers to the ban on doing anything useless or anything devoid of result. One should not however forget that even for gaining bare subsistence one should glean corn rather than apply oneself to agriculture (Manu 4, 2 ff.). Another prohibition and at the same time a reference to the comparative insignificance of grass occurs in ViDh. 71, 87: "On the days of full and new moon he must not cut even grass".

It is not surprising that an author of the AV. should ascribe some more or less important properties to grass; nevertheless the author of AVP. 4, 10, 8 stating that "he anoints himself with the *varcas* ("brilliant vital power and energy") of a noble or auspicious bull, of *tr̥ṇa* that makes good pasturage (*suyavase*, conj.) and of unguent", propounds a puzzling problem.

Nor is it small wonder that *tr̥ṇa* is one of the many objects mentioned in texts dealing with portents and so on, e.g. AVPar. 71, 13, 5 grass or wood carried away by a river portend danger; 64, 5, 10. But if a man wishes to gain in playing he should cover the playground (with grass, Kauś. 41, 12). A withered tree-stump or clump of grass is on the other hand used in pronouncing a curse (suggestive analogy)<sup>18</sup>.

Sometimes a *tr̥ṇa* is employed in order to prevent an unwished for result of a ritual action or procedure from occurring, or to mitigate or delay their effect. According to KS. 25, 5: 108, 13; KapS. 39, 2: 214, 14 one keeps the sacrificer in this world, when the *prastara* has been thrown into the fire whereby he is expected to go to the heavenly world. If by a particular action one should run the risk of interfering with the duration of the people's life a *tr̥ṇa* held over the implement used with a definite mantra will prevent this casualty.

16. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 442 f.

17. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 276 f.

18. J. Schwab, Das altindische Thieropfer, Erlangen 1886, p. 108.

From the description in BGŚ. 1, 22 we learn that the rite called *tr̥ṇagarbha* (“grass-womb” or “grass-embryo”) takes away all evil and destroys all diseases: one should place four pure and learned brahmins and one’s teacher in the directions of the points of the compass and sketch a lotus – which, being purificatory, brings prosperity – in the middle of a square; the person on whose behalf the rite is performed should sit down on a garment that has been spread on that figure, being enveloped in a garment and pronouncing prayers, being covered with pure *tr̥ṇāni* and especially with *dūrṇāḥ* and muttering the thousand names of Viṣṇu or Śiva; the guru and the other brahmins should mutter other mantras; thereupon the grass (*tr̥ṇam*) is removed and after some other ritual acts given to the cows. This rite frees a person from any disease, fulfils all his wishes and gives him access to Viṣṇu’s or Śiva’s world. It is clear that from the “grass-womb” a new man is so to say born. Comparable scenarios of a ritual rebirth characterized by resurrection or a new birth in a sacred enclosure are well known in other parts of the world<sup>19</sup>.

In magic, the vicarious use of images was in rites performed to hurt or kill an enemy a well-known and widespread method of transmitting injury or subjecting a person (see e.g. Kauś. 35, 28; 47, 54<sup>20</sup>; AVPar. 31, 8, 4 ff.). In JB. 1, 202 groats (*karambha*) and green (*harita*) grass (*tr̥ṇa*) serve this purpose. From sacrificial cakes prepared of this material and obviously given the form of a human being the necks are cut off<sup>21</sup> with the formula “here I cut off the neck of NN.”. The image or effigy of the victim is treated as if it were the victim himself. Notice the analogy between green grass and a living enemy.

A man who wishes to remain healthy should sprinkle grass (*tr̥ṇa*) four<sup>22</sup> fingers long with a drop (probably of rain-water)<sup>23</sup> – which is supposed to be auspicious<sup>24</sup> – and stir (with it some fragrant substances) with which he anoints himself with the mantras AVŚ. 12, 1, 23–25 (which “make mention of pleasant odours”) after he has thrown away the grass towards the south (the region of the dead) with the words “the leprosy must be in the dog (i.e. not in me), the grey hair in the he-goat, the fever in the grass, the *rājāyakṣma*<sup>25</sup> in the one who hates us and whom we hate” (Kauś. 13, 11 f.). The grass is here supposed to materialize the diseases and infirmities which he hopes will spare him and to convey these to the animals and enemy mentioned<sup>26</sup>.

In a section on the election of the human *hotar* (sacrifices of full and new moon) ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 23 combines this imitative manual act and the representation of the *hotar* of the *asuras* (*parāvasu* “the one who keeps off wealth”) who is to be ejected

19. I refer to M. Eliade, *Birth and rebirth*, New York 1958, p. 28 ff. etc.

20. See W. Caland’s note, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, Amsterdam Acad. 1900, p. 166, n. 45 and p. 183 f. sub 4.

21. See Caland, *Das Jaiminiya-Brāhmaṇa*, Amsterdam 1919, p. 80, § 75, n. 1.

22. For “four” see p. 20 below.

23. See Caland, *op. cit.*, p. 26, n. 7, who takes *rajoharaṇam* to mean “rain”, but this word can also mean “broom”, so that *tr̥ṇam rajoharaṇam* may denote “grass used as a broom”.

24. See, e.g., Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 134.

25. See J. Filliozat, *La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne*, Paris 1949, p. 40 f.; 80; 83 f.

26. H. Krick, *Das Ritual der Feuergründung*, Wien (Vienna) Acad. 1982, p. 72 f. (fn. 185) draws attention to BŚ. 2, 5 and TB. 3, 2, 8, 9 ff. where water and slops are used for similar purposes.

from the *hotar*'s seat in the shape of a stalk of grass which is thrown outside the sacrificial ground by the *hotar* elect<sup>27</sup>. In ŚŚ. 1, 6, 6 ff. this officiant is enjoined to cast away to the south-west (the region of decay) a withered blade of grass of which he has cut off both ends<sup>28</sup> and which he had taken from the *hotar*'s seat whilst muttering the formula "cast away is Parāvasu (see above), (cast away) he who hates me, and whom I hate"; having touched water (for purification) he places a fresh blade (on the seat) with the top pointed to the north and sits down. The same injunction applies to the *brahman* priest (ŚŚ. 4, 6, 5). For a similar rite see LŚ. 4, 9, 16 ff.: before sitting down on his seat the *brahman* throws grass away towards the south with "thrown away is the one who causes the good to disappear". See also GG. 1, 6, 14; HG. 1, 1, 22, and ĀśvŚ. 1, 3, 31. In this connexion KB. 6, 13 (6, 7, 6 f.) observes that the casting away of the *tr̥ṇa* is to purify the seat (ceremoniously, *śodhayati*). These ritual actions are clearly eliminatory, intended to expel evil<sup>29</sup>. Similarly, GB. 2, 1, 1. When a sacrificer who has a soma ceremony performed is about to sit down on his seat<sup>30</sup> he picks up a blade of grass from it (*tr̥ṇanirasanam*, VaikhŚ. 15, 24: 204, 18) and throws it outside the *sadas* with the words "Ho, son of a second marriage, get thee hence ..." (TS. 3, 2, 4, 4 m; ĀpŚ. 12, 20, 8; BhŚ. 13, 22, 11 whilst prescribing the mantra makes no mention of the action<sup>31</sup>). – When grass has fallen on the rice from which the sacrificial cakes are to be prepared the officiant throws it away with "repelled is the demoniac power" (*rakṣas*, VS. 1, 9 e); "one thereby drives away the evil demons" (ŚBK. 2, 1, 2, 12; ŚBM. 1, 1, 2, 15). See also ŚBK. 2, 2, 3, 23 (cf. ŚBM. 1, 2, 5, 26).

In LŚ. 2, 1, 6; DŚ. 4, 1, 7 a stalk of grass that is thrown away materializes the results of a ritual performance (the chanting of a laud) by which the person concerned is enabled to mount the heavens or to conquer the world. KŚ. 6, 6, 10: the *adhvaryu* having cut the grass (*tr̥ṇam*) that has been put in front of the victim's navel together with the animal's skin, throws part of the grass on the rubbish heap with "expelled is the demoniac power" (VS. 6, 16).

Manual acts of a "symbolic" character often imitate or prefigure a desired outcome<sup>32</sup>. Detachable parts of a person's property that resemble in some respect the object one wishes to appropriate or are supposed to be associated with it are taken away in order to convert that object to one's own use, if at least one accompanies this action with suitable formulae. The man who desires to take the possibility of eating food (*annādyam*) of another person should fall at length in that person's house and gather blades of grass while invoking Prajāpati, through whose help he expects to achieve his object (TS. 3, 4, 8, 6). It would appear to me that the one who, while assuming this position, gathers grass makes himself so to say to an animal that eats

27. See also Krick, op. cit., p. 549 (and p. 254 and 294).

28. See p. 20 below. Such a blade belongs neither to the gods nor to the deceased.

29. See, e.g., Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abr. ed., p. 752 etc.; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 181 ff.

30. W. Caland and V. Hery, *L'agniṣṭoma*, Paris 1906-07, p. 189 f.

31. For similar uses of the mantra see ĀpŚ. 24, 12, 11; MŚ. 5, 2, 15, 4; KŚ. 2, 1, 22; ĀśvŚ. 1, 3, 30; Kauś. 3, 5; 137, 37; VaitS. 1, 20.

32. For miracles brought about by means of consecrated grass see, e.g., *Lakṣmī-Tantra*, 49, 35 ff.



the other man's food (cf. ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2) and by this prefiguration secures the result he desires. If so, this rite is in a way a counterpart of the custom (of the Afghans at the time of Baber) to put grass into one's mouth as a sign of subjection<sup>33</sup>. – In AiB. 3, 22, 7 a blade of grass cut on both sides serves as a 'symbolical' arrow thrown towards a hostile army which one desires to put to flight.

'Magical' substance is indeed often associated 'symbolically' with the object or quality desired, aimed at or affected. One should not, the author of ŚB. 3, 3, 2, 8 argues, throw away any *tr̥ṇa* or piece of wood found among the soma stalks (KŚ. 7, 7, 11) because the soma is the nobility and the other plants (*anyā oṣadhayah*) the common people (third estate, *viś*) who are the nobleman's food; it would be just as if one were to pull some food out of the patron's mouth and throw it away. Notice that *tr̥ṇa* is here included in the category *oṣadhi*.

Just as qualities of objects are considered to reside also in their detachable parts, they may be believed to be somehow associated with a person or thing with which the whole object is supposed to be related, or associated, or to be of the same origin. Thus a stalk plucked out from the *veda* (broom) may serve as a substitute for the *prastara* (ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 16). Particular cases are not lacking, however. At the conclusion of a sacrifice (*darśapūrnamāseṣṭi*) one should not throw the whole *prastara* (at once) into the fire, but take a single stalk (*tr̥ṇa*) from it, because the *prastara* "is" the patron of the sacrifice, who would soon go to yonder world, if the whole *prastara* were thrown into the fire (ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 16). Since then "the patron will live long", the *prastara* minus the stalk continues representing the whole of the patron's life expectation. But after holding the *prastara* for a moment (§ 17) the officiant has to throw it nevertheless into the fire lest he should cut off the patron from (yonder) world. So the officiant has, in the typically *brāhmaṇa* way, to run with the hare and to hunt with the hounds. When, at the right moment (§ 17 and the comm. on § 20), the single stalk has been thrown into the fire lest the patron should be cut off from yonder world, the *adhvaryu* throws this stalk without a mantra<sup>34</sup> after the *prastara* and thereby makes it go towards the place where the patron's other self had gone; then he touches himself (that is, probably his eyes) with VS. 2, 16 f "... O Agni, guard mine eye" (and touches lustral water, cf. KŚ. 1, 10, 14 and ŚB. 1, 9, 3, 7)<sup>35</sup>. "In this way he does not throw (remove, *anupravṛṇakti*) himself into the fire after (the *prastara* or patron)". Similarly, 1, 9, 2, 17. (See also KS. 3, 7, 15 f. the *āgnīdhra* (then) requests the *adhvaryu* to throw the *vedatṛṇa* (= *vedasya tr̥ṇam*, comm.) into it (i.e. the *gārhapatya* fire). The *adhvaryu* performs this task (silently)<sup>36</sup>. Notice that at ŚB. 3, 3, 1, 9 the *adhvaryu* touches himself with "may we not be deprived of increase of prosperity"; cf. also 2, 6, 1, 46.

In an episode of the *varuṇapraghāsa* (the second seasonal sacrifice), which is foreign to VS. and KŚ., the *adhvaryu* and his assistant, the *pratiprasthātā*, are ŚB. 2, 5, 2,

33. H. Gaidoz, Un vieux rite médical, Paris 1892, p. 83, quoted by Th. Zachariae, Kleine Schriften, Bonn and Leipzig 1920, p. 299 f. and R. Pischel, Ins Gras beissen, SitzBer. Berlin 1908, p. 445 ff., esp. p. 457.

34. As to the mantra see ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 15.

35. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, ch. IV etc.

36. For the compound *vedatṛṇa* see, e.g., also ĀśvŚ. 1, 11, 4; 5; 9.

42 ff. (cf. ŚB.K. 1, 5, 1, 37) said to throw, towards the end of the ceremony, their *prastaras* into the fires and, after having taken a single straw from them, to remain sitting by (the fire) – meanwhile the *hotar* recites a eulogy – ; and not until the *āgnīdhra* has enjoined them to throw these straws also into the fire and they have touched themselves, they proceed to discourse together. – Notice that the tie (*idhma-samnahanaṃ*) of the faggot is also thrown into the fire (BhŚ. 4, 17, 3; ĀpŚ. 4, 11, 6); in the mantra the wish is expressed that the *vedī*, *barhis*, hot milk, oblation, faggot etc. may favour the person speaking and submit to him. – That *ṛṇa* stands for any grass used during the sacrifice and that no mention or specification of grasses and their uses is necessary appears from places such as VGP. 4 “the grasses (used) are thrown into the fire”.

At the end of a section which deals with the daily worship of the sacred fires (ĀpŚ. 6, 23, 1 in fine) the author informs us that after having acquitted oneself of this duty with a considerable number of mantras the sacrificer should gather (separate) some of the blades of grass (which lie around) from the fire (*ity upasthāyāgnes ṛṇāny apacinoti*). Thus the sacrificer remains in physical contact with the sacredness of the place. The comm. observes that on other occasions the *adhvaryu* strews the same *ṛṇāni* together with the things used for cleaning again and again round the fire with a view to the important collecting at the end of this rite.

When a householder returns from a journey he has to approach first his *āhavanīya* fire, and thereupon the *gārhapatya*. From KŚ. 4, 12, 19, ŚB. 2, 4, 1, 8; 9, 13 and ŚŚ. 2, 15, 3 it appears that then one of his duties is to sweep the blades of grass which lie around the hearths into the fires (*parisamūhanāni*, explained as *ṛṇānām apalumpānam*, “the taking away of the grass” (see KŚ., l.c., comm.), and as “throwing into the fire, after having taken away pieces of firewood etc. that had fallen around (the fires) (and) are regarded as *ṛṇa*”). These ritual acts are performed without mantras (cf. ŚB. 2, 4, 1, 13 and 10). It would appear that this is another concluding rite: on leaving his house the worshipper had implored his fires to protect his offspring and cattle (ŚB. § 4 f.), and on his return he again approaches them, praising them in their capacity of, respectively, an all-knowing deity, and as a lord of the house and most liberal dispenser of goods to his offspring, adding a prayer for splendid power (*dyumna*) and (overwhelming) strength (*sahas*). ŚŚ. 2, 15, 2 ff. is more explicit: the sacrificer addresses his gratitude to the three fires, to the *āhavanīya* for having protected his cattle, to the *dakṣiṇāgni* for having protected his food, to the *gārhapatya* for having protected his offspring. I am under the impression that the fires are ceremoniously relieved of their responsibility for the safety of offspring and cattle and asked to give their blessing to the householder who is now taking over this duty.

At a given moment the *hotar* performing his part of the rites of full and new moon should sit down, with his knees raised high, remove towards the north some blades of grass (*vyūhya ṛṇāni*) (from among those strewn in the northern part) of the *vedī* and place upon them, on the ground, the extended palm of his (right) hand with the mantra “thou art Mother Aditi (i.e. the earth, see, e.g., ŚB. 11, 1, 3, 3); do not cut (me) off from the intermediate space (the air)”, and so on (ĀśvŚ. 1, 3, 22). In the parallel passage ŚŚ. 1, 5, 8 f. Mother Earth is invoked (“may I not be separ-

ated from this firm foundation”) but no mention is made of the grass. The second mantra prescribed in ĀśvŚ., viz. “I kill here with Agni the god etc. the enemy who hates us ...” corroborates the conclusion that the blades of grass are here also to bring the speaker into close contact with the sacrificial ritual and so to enhance his power.

To what extent any object, however insignificant, that had come into contact with sacrificial material was considered “to belong to the sacrifice” (ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 11)<sup>37</sup> and was therefore, when it was no longer used, to be disposed of in the right way, appears from ŚB., 1. cit. Here the question is discussed, as to whether the grass-ends that were cut off from the grass in tying the *veda* (broom) and used for cleaning the spoons should be thrown into the fire – a usual procedure (see, e.g., ĀpŚ. 3, 7, 11 ff.; KŚ. 3, 8, 5) “in order that they should not be excluded from the sacrifice”; this is also the view of the author of TB. 3, 3, 2, 1 – or on the heap of rubbish (*utkara*, cf. also ŚB., 1. cit.). For the latter procedure see, e.g., ŚB. 3, 8, 2, 15 (the lower end of a stalk of grass used in killing the victim smeared with the blood of the animal victim: “herewith I drive away the demoniac power”), for the former, e.g., § 18 the *adhvaryu* throws the top part of that stalk into the *āhavanīya* as “the kindler of the drops”, inviting in the mantra *Vāyu* to accept these, after the *agnīdh* has thrown a firebrand from the *sāmītra* fire into it (KŚ. 6, 6, 14 f.). It may be noticed that the top part of the “sacrificial grass stalks” (*darbhāḥ*) belongs to the gods (ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 12), the roots and lower parts to the Fathers or chthonian powers<sup>38</sup>.

Occasionally, an object used in magico-religious rites is subjected to a special treatment or adaptation before it can serve for an operator’s or officiant’s purpose. As we have seen the ends of a blade of grass are in particular rites cut off or it is broken on both sides (AiB. 3, 22, 7; ŚŚ. 1, 6, 6). In the ŚB. this use is explained as follows: “as to its being rootless (*amūlam*) and severed on both sides, that is because rootless and severed on both sides the demoniac power moves about in the intermediate space just as man here moves about in the intermediate space (in the air)” (3, 8, 2, 15; cf. also 1, 1, 2, 4; 3, 1, 3, 13, and 4, 1, 1, 20 observing that in this way the evil spirits that roam about in the air are chased away; 3, 8, 1, 12). This may however be a reinterpretation of a pre-existent practice that was somehow based on the principle of analogy<sup>39</sup>. Analogies, even of an elaborate character, often determine what ingredients are selected by an operator. On the other hand, since qualities of objects are widely believed to be transmissible, a broken or incomplete object thrown away with a suitable formula may be supposed to break, destroy or cut off the persons or spirits aimed at. See also MŚ. 5, 2, 15, 5. – Occasionally, a text supplies us with a detail: LŚ. 2, 1, 6 enjoins to cut off four finger-breadths of the blade of grass which is to be thrown into the *cātvāla* (*bahispavamāna* ritual): because the accompanying mantra mentions four contingencies?

Sometimes the difference in ritual use and significance between clipped and

37. See also TS. 3, 3, 8, 3 f.

38. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 123 f.

39. Cf., e.g., H. Webster, Magic, Stanford Cal. and London 1948, p. 132.



unclipped grass is very clear. When those who at the end of the *pravargya* ritual<sup>40</sup> wish to arrange the utensils employed in the shape of a man, a broom (*veda*) of *muñja* grass is with its ends uncut (cf. BŚ. 9, 5: 271, 6) placed above the *mahāvīra* vessels (serving as the head) to represent the tuft of hair; afterwards one should loosen a second broom with the ends of the grass cut and place these on the figure to represent the muscles (BhŚ. 11, 5, 21; 11, 15, 2; 23; ĀpŚ. 15, 15, 1; cf. 15, 5, 18; 15, 7, 2).

A case of a double purpose of two stalks taken from the *vedi* at the same time occurs in ŚB. 4, 2, 5, 3 ff. Before proceeding to the place where the *bahiṣpavamānastotra* is to be chanted the *adhvaryu* takes two stalks from the *barhis* on the *vedi*; one of these he throws towards the *cātvalā* – from which the gods went to heaven – in order to make the sacrificer look along the road to heaven, and the other in front of the chanters who represent Prajāpati, to whom the stalk is offered so that this god will not gain possession of the *adhvaryu*<sup>41</sup>.

According to BĠŚ. 1, 3, 8 and 4, 5, 7 one should sacrifice whilst holding plants (*ośadhayah*), groats, a flower, a piece of wood, a root, fruit<sup>42</sup> or grass (*tṛṇam*, obviously any grass) in the hand, no other object unless there is a (special) rule. This implies that *tṛṇa*, like the other objects mentioned, is supposed to bring the person sacrificing into contact with the auspicious and invigorating force of nature which, it is hoped, will strengthen and protect him.

RV. 6, 48 is called the *tṛṇapāṇi* hymn (BD. 5, 113; Sarvānukramaṇī<sup>43</sup>). From ṚgVidh. 2, 22, 2 and Skandasvāmin's commentary we learn that it owes this name to the fact that it should be recited by one who whilst concentrating his attention upon it has taken grass in the hand<sup>44</sup>. Then, the ṚgVidh. goes on to say, he will obtain the fruit of the study of that *sūkta* (see especially st. 8; 10; 21: protection against enemies, strength) and will (always) possess grass. The hymn does not refer to grass but the no doubt popular rite recorded in ṚgVidh. st. 3 f. attests to the belief that the procedure mentioned above was supposed to be a safeguard against demons and human enemies and that by throwing the grass into fire or water or on salt soil at the end of the recitation one leaves behind what is fearful. The grass has obviously a double function: held in the hand it protects and thrown away it represents the evil or the danger, which one fears or from which one wishes to be freed, in material form<sup>45</sup>.

After RV. 5, 49 three lines are handed down which, being entirely unrelated to the contents of the *sūkta*, have reference to the above ceremony<sup>46</sup>: "At the end of

40. See J.A.B. van Buitenen, *The pravargya*, Poona 1968, p. 130 f.

41. For particulars see p. 176 f. below.

42. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, esp. ch. V, *passim*.

43. See also Śaḍguruśiṣya on RV. 5, 49 ("while he is learning the fifth (stanza) he takes *tṛṇa* in his hand; by means of (with regard to) the study of the Veda he becomes one who holds *tṛṇa* in his hand ...") and 6, 48.

44. See p. 42; 69; 85; 171.

45. For various forms of transference or expulsion of evil, scapegoats and so on in many parts of the world see Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, p. 706 ff.

46. For the text, notes and a German translation see J. Scheftelowitz, *Die Apokryphen des Ṛgveda*, Breslau 1906, p. 169 f.

the *sūkta* the grasses (should be thrown into) the fire, the wilderness (*aranye*, which may have replaced *irīṇe* “on salt soil” (ṚgVidh.)) or into water. The study (of the Veda) which is (connected with) the strewing (of the grass, *trṇaiḥ*) has been studied (i.e. completed); I will strew, O Bhava, for thee, O Bhava – this is a non-ṛgvedic name of Agni as well as Rudra<sup>47</sup> –. Go to the gathering together of the waters (*samudram*) of the ponds, wells, pools, *svāhā*; go to Agni, *svāhā*”. ṚV. 5, 49 which is not employed in the solemn ritual may have been reserved for *upasthāna*, i.e. paying homage while standing or sitting down by one of the ritual fires<sup>48</sup>. The same lines occur in another order after ṚV. 6, 48<sup>49</sup>.

An interesting case of the use of *trṇa* as well as *barhis*<sup>50</sup> in the same context occurs in some passages discussing the question as to whether the *agnihotra* should be concluded or not<sup>51</sup>. KS. 6, 8: 58, 8 ff. is of the opinion that it should be: “he anoints a blade of grass (*trṇam*, with milk or ghee) and throws it after (the oblation into the fire). This is the conclusion ... When he anoints the blade and throws it after, he thereby appeases it (*śamayati*)”. See also KapS. 4, 7: 46, 10 ff. MS. 1, 8, 7: 126, 8 ff. mentioning the same rite speaks likewise of *trṇa*. TB. 2, 1, 4, 9, arguing that the *agnihotra* is a sacrifice without a conclusion, states that the officiant does not throw the *barhis* after (the oblation into the fire). – See also MS. 4, 8, 5: 112, 14 *trṇam pṛāśya juhōti*, but TS. 6, 6, 3, 2 *barhir abhi juhōti* “for a firm support (*pratiṣṭhityai*) of the oblations” (in a chapter on the concluding bath of the soma sacrifice). So *trṇa* in KS., KapS. and MS. refers to the *barhis*, the grass strewn over the *vedī* (and other parts of the sacrificial ground) which now is discarded.

A single *trṇa* does duty for a *barhis* in cases such as ŚB. 3, 8, 1, 11 (KŚ. 6, 5, 10), where the *adhvaryu* takes two stalks from the *barhis* of the *vedī* (“the covered *vedī*”), one of which he later on throws down to serve as a *barhis* when those concerned cut the animal up, to prevent sacrificial food from being spilt, because “what is firmly established (*pratiṣṭhāti*) thereon is not lost” (ŚB. § 14; KŚ. 6, 5, 15 f.)<sup>52</sup>.

Elsewhere we find the word *trṇa* where we might expect *darbha* so that then also the former object may be supposed to be a substitute. When about the time of sunset<sup>53</sup> the *adhvaryu* makes the chanters commence the *ṣoḍaśin stotra* he takes into, or has in, his hands grass and gold; the text (KŚ. 12, 6, 1) uses the plural: *trṇahiranyaiḥ*, which probably means one piece of gold and some blades of grass. The gold represents the sun after sunset (cf. ŚB. 3, 5, 1, 20; 3, 9, 2, 9). The use of the grass is elucidated by ŚB. 12, 4, 4, 6 and KŚ. 25, 3, 17 dealing with an expiation necessitated by the occurrence of sunset before the *āhavanīya* fire has been taken out: then one should fasten a piece of gold to a *darbha* plant (*hiranyam darbhe prabadhya*, ŚB. 12,

47. I refer to A.A. Macdonell, Vedic mythology, Strassburg 1897, p. 75. Cf. e.g., ŚB. 1, 7, 3, 8.

48. See J. Gonda, Hymns of the Ṛgveda not employed in the solemn ritual, Amsterdam Academy 1978, p. 43.

49. See Scheftelowitz, op. cit., p. 171.

50. For TS. 6, 3, 8, 2 f. see p. 14 above.

51. See p. 180 below.

52. As to the other stalk see ŚB. 3, 8, 2, 12; KS. 6, 6, 8 and p. 14 above.

53. Cf. ŚB. 4, 5, 3, 11 and J. Eggeling, The Śatapatha Brahmana translated, II, Oxford 1885 (Delhi 1963), p. 401, n. 3.

4, 4, 6; see also 7), and take that towards the west, where it is to represent the sun, the *darbha* – like the auspicious gold – being a means of purification (*pavitram*)<sup>54</sup>. In the same context ŚŚ. 3, 19, 9 makes mention of gold fastened to a blade of *kuśa*. See also MŚ. 6, 1, 5, 33<sup>55</sup> and ŚB. 2, 9, 2 yellow gold (i.e. gold) is with a stalk of *kuśa* bound to a sacrificial spoon with which ghee is taken and poured into the fire.

The *adhvaryu* performing the sacrifices of full and new moon should at a given moment take a blade of grass from the *vedi* (BhŚ. 2, 14, 8; ĀpŚ. 2, 15, 1). The text (*veder avyantam tṛṇam ādāya*) has been variously explained: “einen Grashalm von der Mitte der Vedi genommen hat” (Caland, cf. the comm.: *vedyāś ca l. a. avigatāntam madhyavarti tasya pracyāvanam*); “should take in hand the *darbha*-blades from near the (northern) boundary of the altar” (Śrautakośa); “takes from the altar a *darbha*-blade whose end (i.e. root) is not separated (from the altar)” (correctly Kashikar)<sup>56</sup>. MŚ. 1, 3, 1, 24 reads instead: having taken up *tṛṇa* that has been extended along from the *barhis*”. ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 3 speaks of taking *barhis* from the covered *vedi* (*vede sfirṇāyai*); alternatively the *adhvaryu* may cut off and take a chip of firewood; from this text it appears that both objects were, just as the straw-band with which the firewood was tied (KŚ. 3, 1, 13; ĀpŚ. 2, 15, 2 *idhmasamnahane*), regarded as belonging to the sacrifice and therefore as a suitable means of “taking hold” of it, or of deriving benefit from coming into contact with it.

In the descriptions of the same rites variations in the choice of words and in the particulars mentioned or omitted are a most common occurrence. When in the section on the *piṇḍapitryajña* the utensils required are to be arranged the author of BŚ. 1, 4: 6, 1 confines himself to the statement that they are placed on *tṛṇāni* that are spread as an (underlying) layer; BhŚ. 1, 7, 2 says that after having strewn *darbha* (plural) round the southern fire (here called *anvāhāryapacana*) one arranges the utensils; and ĀpŚ. 1, 7, 3 ff. informs us that one fetches either *barhis* (“Streu”, Caland) or *tṛṇāni* that have been severed near to the roots with one cut<sup>57</sup> (likewise ŚŚ. 4, 4, 2 speaking of *kuśa* blades; see also ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 17, where the comm. explains *barhīmsi*); thereupon one strews *darbha* (plural) round the southern (*dakṣiṇa*) fire as well as to the south or west of it (other *darbha* (plural) and places the utensils ready (*prayunakti*). ŚŚ. 4, 3, 3 makes mention of *kuśa* (plur.) on which the wooden sword is placed, and so on; ĀśvŚ. 2, 6, 4 omits a word for the grass in his reference to the strewing round the fires.

When on the eleventh day of the *agnicayana* ritual it appears that the *hotar* does not recite Agni’s *uktha*, a text to be pronounced for appeasement (ĀpŚ. 17, 12, 12; KB. 19, 4 (19, 3, 1 ff.)), and consequently does not desire the fruits of the ceremony for himself – that is, if the ritual is not part of a *saltra*, a soma sacrifice of twelve or more days’ duration – the patron himself scatters blades of (dry) grass (*tṛṇāni*) – which now obviously will suffice – behind the tail (of the fireplace), sits down

54. For purification after ritual transgressions see Gonda, Vedic ritual, ch. XVIII.

55. See p. 86 f.

56. W. Caland, Das Śrautasūtra des Apastamba, I, Göttingen and Leipzig 1921, p. 68; Śrautakośa, I, Engl. section, I, p. 332; C.G. Kashikar, Sūtras of Bharadvāja, II, Poona 1964, p. 52.

57. No doubt with the implication that with concentration of effort on one single purpose the action is at once successful; see also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 21, al. 1.

on them and praises once or three times with the recitation (*uktha*) of Agni, i.e. TS. 5, 6, 8, 6 h (BŚ. 10, 49: 51, 2).

A case of interchangeability of *tṛṇa* and *darbha* – by no means a rare phenomenon – occurs in the descriptions of the sacrifices of full and new moon. After the bringing of the pot containing the *praṇītā* water and before the placing of the utensils the *adhvaryu* should, according to KŚ. 2, 3, 6, strew grass (*tṛṇaiḥ*, plural, “sacrificial grass” Eggeling<sup>58</sup>; “sacred grass” Ranade) around the three fires and then place the utensils; similarly, ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 22 *tṛṇaiḥ paristṛṇāti*; in the comm. on KŚ. it reads *darbhatṛṇaiḥ*, which must mean “the straw that is the remains of the *darbha*”. In this connexion the word *tṛṇa* occurs twice in BŚ., viz. 1, 4: 6, 1 (see above) and 20, 5: 14, 6 (“after having strewn *tṛṇāni* ... the *adhvaryu* should place the utensils on them”<sup>59</sup>). BhŚ. 1, 16, 1, on the other hand, while omitting the object of the verb *paristṛya*, refers to 1, 11, 2 where *darbha* has been used. In contrast to KB. 18, 8 (18, 5, 25) reading *vyapadadhāti darbhapīṇjūḷāni* “they separate (distribute) the bunches of *darbha*”, GB. 2, 4: 214, 11 borrowing this passage has *tṛṇāni vyavadadhāti*.

Whereas Kauś. 33, 13 makes, in a rite for a prosperous pregnancy and confinement, mention of *darbha* which is to surround a definite root that is to be fastened in the woman’s hair, GG. 2, 6, 8 speaks, in a similar rite, of *tṛṇaiḥ*, which, however, are to be placed in the open air with the wish “bestow (manly) energy on this (*nyagrodha*) shoot”, which is enwrapped with this grass.

In the section on the construction of the *vedī* MŚ. 1, 2, 4, 9 ff. the *adhvaryu* is enjoined to put down a *tṛṇa* obliquely at the end of some lines that had been scratched previously, with the mantra “thou art the defensive armour of the earth”. Thereupon he cuts it obliquely with the wooden sword and takes away the earth (that has been dug up) with the blade, whilst pronouncing the mantra “go to the fold where the cattle are”. In the other *śrautasūtra* of the Maitrāyaṇīyas the former mantra accompanies the placing of *darbha* on the east end of the *vedī* and the latter the taking up of the foremost part of the *tṛṇa* (*tṛṇāgram*) that has been cut through three or four times (VārŚ. 1, 3, 1, 32 f.); in § 35 the dust (with the other parts of the grass, *satṛṇān pāmsūn*) is taken away with the wooden sword. – In the description of the *ekādaśinī* ritual VārŚ. 3, 2, 6, 46 speaks likewise of *tṛṇāgrāṇi* which are to be thrown away (and are no longer of ritual value to the sacrificer *cum suis*) in contrast to MŚ. 5, 2, 2, 24 which uses the word *darbhān*.

He who is performing the *agnimukha* rites<sup>60</sup> has, successively, to prepare a seat (*āsana*) for Agni (the fire) after having strewn *darbha* and consecrated it by sprinkling (BGŚ. 5, 1, 2); to mitigate the heat of the fire that his wife has brought near in the form of charcoal ...; to add three pieces of thick wood to it and worship it, to prepare a seat and then throw down *tṛṇa* and sprinkle it, to touch water (for purification) and perform a number of other ritual acts. – Towards the end of the same

58. See Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 10 f. n. 1.

59. One should not be led astray by the translation *darbha*-blades and the addition of this word in the Śrautaśāstra, I, Engl. section, I, Poona 1958, p. 252 f. The same translation also ibidem, p. 254 (BŚ. 20, 5: 14, 16) and elsewhere.

60. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 352 etc.

rite one collects (the butter refuse) from the (grass that has been) strewn round into the butter vessel, smears the *barhis* in the manner of the *prastara*, covers the *tṛṇa* and throws it into the fire; after having touched water and *tṛṇa* one throws the middle one of the (three) *paridhis*<sup>61</sup> into the fire and so on (5, 1, 27 f.).

For cleaning the sacrificial ladles one should use wisps of grass (*saṃmārjanāni*, TB. 3, 3, 2, 1, speaking in this connexion also of *darbhāḥ*, but stating explicitly that these wisps should consist of the top of the *veda* (broom), and going on to say that they have the appearance of a tuft of grass (*stamba*), for (useful) plants are (growing) by tufts). After having used this grass the *āgnīdhra* should throw it into the fire on which he has (heated and) cleaned the spoons in order to support the cattle (of the patron), because cattle delight in herbs growing on recently burnt pasture land. In BŚ. 1, 12 these wisps are called “chips of the broom” (*vedāparivāsānāni*), in BhŚ. 2, 4, 3 and ĀpŚ. 2, 4, 2 “tips of the broom” (*vedāgrāṇi*); cf. BhŚ. 4; 5; ĀpŚ. 4; 5; 6 and *saṃmārjanāni* (BhŚ. 2, 5, 1); this text has them thrown on that fire or on the rubbish-heap (*utkara*), but BŚ. 1, 12: 17, 4 employs the general term *tṛṇāni* to denote these grasses that, it is stated, are to be thrown down before the rubbish-heap to become the place on which to deposit the large ladles (*srucaḥ*). In this connexion ĀpŚ. 2, 4, 10 has *darbheṣu*. – The clay that has been collected for the *agnicayana* ceremonies is at BŚ. 10, 3: 3, 8 placed upon the skin of a black antelope (thus also ŚB. 6, 4, 1, 6; cf. TS. 5, 1, 4, 1 ff.) which is laid on *tṛṇāni* that have been strewn with their tips towards the east.

Whereas BhŚ. 2, 9, 9 says that the officiant should prepare two *vidhṛtis* (indicating a boundary-line<sup>62</sup>) out of the *barhis*, and ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 12 uses, in the same context, the word *darbhau*, ŚBK. 2, 3, 2, 24 and ŚBM. 1, 3, 4, 10 state that two blades of grass (*tṛṇe*) should, for that purpose, be taken from the covered *vedi* (*sfīrṇām vedim ...*) but KŚ. 2, 8, 5 speaks of two grass-blades of the *barhis* (*barhiṣas tṛṇe*) which are laid across, adding that these should be other than those strewn already on the *vedi*, because they should not have been employed previously.

Among the material for the *gopitryajña* to be collected on the day preceding the day on which the sacred fires are to be set up mention is in BŚ. 2, 8: 45, 9 and 46, 15 made of a handful of grass (*tṛṇamuṣṭi*). When however grass is employed for particular purposes other words are used. When this material has been screened off the *adhvaryu* should cut off part of the sacrificer’s hair together with grass, now said to consist of three *darbhapuñjīlāni* which he has put above the latter’s right ear. Thereupon the *adhvaryu* purifies him at his head, navel, and knees by means of 21 *darbha* bunches (the same word) divided into three bunches of seven blades each<sup>63</sup>. When at a later moment grass is strewn round the fire, it is called *barhis* (p. 46, 10). When the sacrificer commits the cow (the victim) to the Fathers he ought to have taken *barhis* in his hand (2, 9: 48, 11). – The person who is about to perform the *agniṣṭoma* should bring near 22 *darbhapuñjīlāni*, a stalk of *sara* reed or grass and also a large quantity of grass (*darbhapuñjīlāni*) and bamboo, sacrificial animals, clar-

61. The encircling sticks; see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 174; 351.

62. See p. 7 f.

63. For these numbers see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 29 ff.; 38; 40 f.



ified butter, vessels etc. (BŚ. 6, 1: 156, 3; 4; 7); in 25, 4: 232, 1 the last articles are described as *prabhūtaṃ tṛṇavaṃsam*. From the occurrence of the word *tṛṇāni* in BŚ. 9, 13: 284, 3 it may therefore be inferred that when the sacrificer wishes to dispose of (the objects used in) the *pravargya* ceremony they may be placed on any grass (cf. I, 3: 4, 3).

That in ritual practice *tṛṇa* and *kuśa* were, or could be, used for different purposes appears, e.g., from BŚ. 9, 1: 265, 11. Those who intend to perform the *pravargya* ritual have to spread *tṛṇāni* the points of which are turned eastward, and thereupon the skin of a black antelope. On that skin they make a round mound which they cover with young sprouts of *kuśa* and knots of *ḍurvā* (panic grass). – But elsewhere the words denote the same material in the same context: GG. 4, 2, 24 makes mention of a layer of southward-pointed *kuśa* spread out to the west of the pits but KhG. 3, 5, 13 – which is a concise revised version of GG. – speaks of a layer made with (of) *tṛṇa* (plural).

The following is an interesting example of the use of various words in the same ritual context. When a soma sacrifice draws to a close the adherents of several schools throw grass in the remains of the *ekadhana* water – that is the water that has been fetched from running waters early in the morning on the pressing day and part of which has come to be mixed with *soma* (cf. ĀpŚ. 12, 16, 11) – squeeze that grass and make the water sharp (of taste); the mixture is distributed among those who are entitled to receive a cup filled with *soma*; they partake, each of them from his own cup, of the mixture by smelling it<sup>64</sup>. Now, whereas KB. 18, 8 (18, 5, 25) says that those concerned distribute *darbhāṇijūlāni* and that, when the water and the plants come together, the *soma* is complete, ŚŚ. 8, 9, 2 uses the term *pāvitrāṇi* to indicate the grass and adds the mantra: “the water has united with the water, the herbs (*ośadhayaḥ*) with juice (*rasena*) ...”, ĀśvŚ. 6, 12, 7 speaks of *haritatṛṇāni* (“green grasses”)<sup>65</sup>, BhŚ. 14, 19, 3 and ĀpŚ. 13, 17, 9 of *hariṇi ḍurvā* (“green *ḍurvā* grass”); the brief but clear MŚ. 2, 5, 4, 10, speaking of *ḍurvāḥ*, addresses, in the mantra, the drink as “*soma* purified (*dhautāḥ*) in the water”; KŚ. 10, 8, 7 says that the goblets filled with water are touched by those who manage these vessels after having placed *haritakuśan* (“green *kuśa*”) in them, the mantra being VS. 8, 14 “we have again been united with vital energy (*varcas*) ...”: cf. ŚB. 4, 4, 3, 13 f.<sup>66</sup>. The conclusion seems legitimate that here the grass represents *soma*, or gives the drink at least the character of *soma*, and that, according to the tradition as a whole, several grasses may fulfil that function.

The following passage may clarify the relation supposed to exist between *tṛṇa* and *ośadhi*. The pain suffered by the animal victim that is being immolated is transferred to men, if a man is touched; to cattle, if a cow; to the trees, if wood, to the (useful) plants, if grass; to the waters (*āpaḥ*, as a divine cosmic element or principle), if water (MS. 3, 10. 7: 139, 8).

64. For particulars see Caland and Henry, *L’agniṣṭoma*, p. 389.

65. The comm. (Gārgya Nārāyaṇa) observes that they belong to the species *ḍurvā* and that in another manual they are said to be particular *darbhāḥ*.

66. See also Eggeling’s note, in Śat. Br. II, p. 373.

Let us by way of supplement and recapitulation briefly survey some 'translatable meanings', shades of meaning and contextual uses of the word *tṛṇa*. It can denote fodder for cattle (e.g. BŚ. 6, 9: 165, 12)<sup>67</sup>. It can be used as material for making a mat (6, 27: 189, 17). The word *tṛṇa* denotes also a single blade of grass (ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 16; 2, 5, 2, 42; 3, 8, 1, 11). When in the story told in JUB. 4, 10, 3 a supernatural being, pretending to be able to destroy the universe by fire and to blow away anything on the earth, could not burn or take away a *tṛṇa*, "grass" symbolizes something unsubstantial and insignificant. There is no doubt that in ViSm. 73, 25 *tṛṇa* is the used and valueless grass which together with the remains of the food eaten by the brahmins is thrown away near the leavings; in 73, 17 the same grass had, before the performance of the rite, been called *darbha*. Notice also explanations such as that by Gārgya Nārāyaṇa on ĀśvŚ. 1, 11, 9 *vedatṛṇāni* "the grass blades of the broom": "they are called *tṛṇāni* because they are loosened from the bound broom". In the plural it appears to be a general term for the sacrificial grass collectively: ŚB. 12, 5, 1, 12 "the grasses (*tṛṇāni*) that (ordinarily) are lying with their tops towards the north<sup>68</sup> he (the person performing a ceremony in connexion with the death of an *agnihotrin*) lays them so as to have their tops towards the south". Commenting upon Manu 2, 43 stating that girdles may be made of *kuśa* etc., if *muñja* grass is not available, Kullūka says that those grasses are species of *tṛṇa*, or particular *tṛṇāni* (*kuśādirbhis tṛṇaviśeṣaiḥ*). Likewise, the comm. on ŚB. 11, 4, 1, 6 (*vīraṇās tṛṇaviśeṣaiḥ*). The comm. on KŚ. 6, 1, 12 explains *kuśataruṇa* "a fresh shoot of *kuśa*" by *darbhātṛṇa* "grass, viz. the sacrificial grass known as *darbha*". But in JG. 1, 1: 1, 11 the word has a more general sense: "any kind of *tṛṇa* (*sarvatṛṇāni*) with the exception of *śukatṛṇa* ("awn grass, a particular kind of prickly grass) sacchacum reed, *uśira* (?), *balbaja*, *mutava*, *nala* (a species of reed) and *śuṅṭha*".

That *tṛṇa* could be used as a general term appears also from compounds such as *dhūpatṛṇa* which in the plural denotes "grass serving (or that has served) as incense" (BhŚ. 11, 15, 24; ĀpŚ. 15, 15, 1; HŚ. 24, 6, 12). When, at the end of the *pravargya* ritual, one desires to arrange the utensils in the shape of a man such grass should represent the flesh. The word occurs, no doubt as a general name for unspecified grass, as the first member of terms of grass-like kinds of grain, considered to be of an inferior quality (*tṛṇadhānya*, *tṛṇadhānyaka*).

Gravel or sand (*sikatā*) is considered to be bad, harmful or deteriorated (and unfit for ritual purposes), if it is mixed with ashes, hairs, chaff, fragments of earthenware, crumbling earth, *tṛṇa*, bones and ants; if with ashes, the patron will pass away; if with hairs, a woman (his wife) will die; if with chaff, his son, ... if with ants – which also pollute sacrificial food etc. – the kingdom is ruined; if with *tṛṇa*, the rite results to nothing (*karmakṣayaḥ*). Here *tṛṇa* probably is mainly useless, used, worthless (rests of) grasses (BGŚ. 1, 5, 2 f.). In a syntactically irregular and possibly somewhat corrupt enumeration of requisites the author of VaikhS. 11, 10: 130, 3 mentions wet *tṛṇa* that is to be stretched out on dry sand, stones with wood sticking out, lumps of earth, hair (of the body) etc. (these should be rejected); *barhis* consisting

67. See p. 9; 11 m above.

68. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 53.

of (?) material fit for covering or strewing round, (of) *kūrcas*, *pavitras* etc., *kuśa* and *kāśa* grass or hair of the tail of a horse; in case these are not available one should procure fragrant reed (*tejana*), (the sedge-like) *muñja* grass, (the soft) *ulapa* grass, cultivable millet, wild rice, corn, *dūrvā*, *tṛṇa* (which here may mean ordinary or unspecified grass) or other herbage; among the plants that are to be avoided are *śunṭha*, *śara* (saccharum sara), awns of grain, and broken *tṛṇa*.

It may finally be observed that, in contrast to grass that is (also) denoted by nouns such as *kuśa* or *darbha*, *tṛṇa* is rarely said to be purified or to be in need of purification.

The generally accepted etymological connexion of *tṛṇa* with Greek *τέρναξ* “the stem of the *κάρκτος*, the cardoon (cynara cardunculus, a vegetable allied to artichoke and thistle)”, the German words for “thorn”, viz. German *dorn*, Dutch *doorn*, Engl. *thorn* – also in names of thorny or prickly plants such as Engl. *hawthorn*, Dutch *hagedoorn* –, the ChSlav. *trǫnŭ* “thorn”, should not make us believe that the Indian *tṛṇa* ‘originally’ denoted only or mainly thorny or prickly grasses. Nor should we rely upon the less convincing derivation of this word group from a root *ter-* “denoting words for stiff and stinging sheaths of plants”<sup>69</sup> and on the identification of that element with the root *ter-* “to penetrate”, when we are trying to establish the identity of *tṛṇa* in various ancient Indian contexts. It is, on the other hand and to mention only this, worth remembering that it was also grazed by cows and horses, although it is not considered to belong to an Indo-European word group that denotes grass as “fodder” or as “green blade(s)”<sup>70</sup>.

69. A. Walde and J. Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*, II, Berlin and Leipzig 1927, p. 641; cf. also HJ. Frisk, *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, II, Heidelberg 1961–1970, p. 881; M. Mayrhofer, *Kurzgefasstes etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*, I, Heidelberg 1956, p. 522.

70. C.D. Buck, *A dictionary of selected synonyms in the principal Indo-European languages*, Chicago 1949, p. 519 f.



## Kuśa

The etymologically obscure<sup>1</sup> Sanskrit word *kuśa*<sup>2</sup>, which does not occur in the Vedic *saṃhitās*, is often said to denote the plant named *eragrostis cynosuroides* Beauv. by botanists, but there are also other names, e.g. *poa cynosuroides* Retz.<sup>3</sup> Many ancient and modern authors regard *darbha* and *kuśa* as identical<sup>4</sup>, but others distinguish these plants clearly; see, e.g., Ḍalhaṇa, on *Suśrutasaṃhitā*, Sūtr. 38, 75: “*kuśa* is short and soft and has leaves with the form of a needle; *darbha* has leaves which are broad, long and rough”<sup>5</sup>.

That *kuśa* characterized by long pointed stalks<sup>6</sup> could prick, cut (in ŚG. 1, 8, 14 two blades of *kuśa* are severed with another one) or wound one’s finger etc. appears from ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 16; 5, 3, 2, 7 and ViS. 20, 44<sup>7</sup>. This explains the occurrence of the compound *kuśakaṇṭaka* “the point or needle of *kuśa*, *kuśa* needle”<sup>8</sup> in ŚG. 1, 20,

1. See Mayrhofer, Etym. Wörterbuch, I, p. 245.
2. The feminine noun *kuśā*, a term denoting the small pieces of wood used to mark the occurrence of each *stotra* verse during the chanting of a *stotra* (“laud”, i.e. a ritual chant sung at the *soma* ceremonies) (see W. Howard, *Samavedic chant*, New Haven and London 1977, p. 20 f.; 521 f.) is in all probability rightly held (LŚ. 2, 6, 1 ff.; DŚ. 5, 2, 1 ff.) to owe its name to the fact that, being made of wood that is suitable for sacrifice (especially *asvattha* or *udumbara*, also *palāśa*) and a span long, it has “on the side of the rind a *kuśa*-like back”; for stems ending in *-ā-* besides thematic stems and a slight difference in meaning see J. Wackernagel and A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2, Göttingen 1954; p. 241. It is in this connexion worth noticing that on the ninth day of the *agnicayana* ceremonies three chanters perform rites around the pole of *udumbara* wood which has been erected in the centre of the *sadas* (the shed within the *mahāvedi*, PB. 6, 4, 6). This pole is covered with *darbha*, and a string made of that grass is wound 28 times round it, because 28 *stotras* will be chanted in the *sadas*. When chanting these chants, the *udgātara* wears a ring of *darbha* grass – which is also called *stotra* – consisting of two blades called *barhiṣī* in BŚ. 7, 8: 212, 19, round his finger. After each song he inserts this *stotra* (the ring) into the corresponding row of the string on the pole, so that anyone can see how many *stotras* have been chanted. I refer to F. Staal (ed.), *Agni, the Vedic ritual of the fire altar*, Berkeley 1983, I, p. 579; 625 ff.
3. See J. Meulenbeld, *The Mādhavanidāna*, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1974, p. 561 f.
4. I shall have to revert to this point; see ch. V.
5. For myths etc. connected with *kuśa* see Shakti M. Gupta, *Plant myths and traditions in India*, Leiden 1971, p. 41 ff.
6. Hence references to places rough with *kuśa*, e.g. MārḱPur. 10, 65.
7. In Mbh. 3, 81, 98 ff. the story of Maṅkaṇaka is told who was wounded with a blade of *kuśa*. See, e.g., also ViDh. 20, 44; Kāthāsar. 5, 133; 71, 194; 98, 13 (“his feet wounded with sharp points of *kuśa*”).
8. In ViS. 20, 44 being touched by (something small insignificant like) the point of a blade of *kuśa* may be fatal.

3; PG. 1, 14, 4. This needle is together with a *soma* stalk, the last shoot of a *nyagrodha* tree etc. pounded and sprinkled into the right nostril of a woman who it is hoped will give birth to a son. The 'symbolism' is suggestive. – Hence the occurrence of *kuśa* as a utensil for sketching (for drawing a costus (or lotus leaf?) in sandy soil, BGS. 3, 12, 1 or the lines of the figure called *lakṣaṇa* on the sacrificial place (PG. 1, 1, 2 etc.<sup>9</sup>). Hence also the technical term *kuśapṛṣṭha* “*kuśa* pin” for the sticks for counting the *stotra* verses, which should be made of wood suitable for sacrifice (the holy fig tree etc.) and be a span long, have a *kuśa*-like back and so on (LŚ. 2, 6, 1; DŚ. 5, 2, 1 ff.)<sup>10</sup>.

For *kuśa* grass as material for making a broom (*veda*) see BŚ. 9, 14 describing the *pravargya* ritual): 287, 9, where a broom made of it is loosened, anointed with curds mixed with honey and placed (literally, spread out) behind the ceremonial *mahāvīra* vessel (see also 288, 10). In the same section mention is made of a *veda* made of *muñja* grass. From KŚ. 1, 3, 23 it may be inferred that according to the sacrificer's ambitions the handful of *kuśa* was transformed into brooms of various forms, e.g. into the shape of the knee of a calf if he desired to obtain cattle. Among the utensils for the *pravargya* are two brooms (*veda*) of *kuśa* and one of *muñja* grass (BŚ. 9, 5: 271, 6).

A winnowing basket (*śurpa*) could be made of *kuśa*, mango leaves, bamboo or the coarse grass known as *balbaja* (AVPar. 23, 1, 5). Among the utensils to be procured by a person desirous to perform the *varuṇapraghāsa* is, according to Bau-dhāyana, a winnowing basket made of reeds or cane (BŚ. 5, 5: 113, 8), but Śālīki preferred one made of *darbha* or *kuśa* (21, 2: 72, 7).

The man who undertakes the construction of the great fireplace (*agnicayana*) should bring near a horse and an ass and for these animals bridles of *muñja* or *kuśa* (BŚ. 10, 1: 1, 1; see also 15, 2: 205, 9, *aśvamedha*). See also ĀpŚ. 20, 2, 7; 20, 3, 5.

In default of *muñja* grass the girdle of a brahmin youth should be made of *kuśa* (PG. 2, 5, 24; Manu 2, 43). – The sacrificial cord (*yajñopavītam*)<sup>11</sup> of an Aryan may be a string or cord (of cotton, *sūtra*), a garment, or “simply a rope of *kuśa* (*kuśa-rajju*)”; see GG. 1, 2, 1 and KhG. 1, 1, 4 (omitting the garment)<sup>12</sup>; BDh. 1, 5, 5 says that it shall be made of *kuśa* or be a thread (of cotton)<sup>13</sup>.

In the sections dealing with the preparation of the sacrificial place and implements for the domestic sacrifices several gr̥hyasūtras teach their readers to make strainers (or purifiers, *pavitra*). One should cut off two young *kuśa* blades which are not unequal, with unbroken points and without shoots, with another *kuśa* blade pronouncing the formula “ye are purifiers ...” (by which they are formally “endowed” with their specific quality) and sprinkle them (with water), saying “... belonging to Viṣṇu” (ŚG. 1, 8, 14 ff.; see also JG. 1, 2; ĀśvG. 1, 3, 3; PG. 1, 1,

9. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 232; Krick, Feuergründung, p. 107.

10. For particulars see A. Parpola, The Śrautasūtras of Lātyāyana and Drāhyāyana, Helsinki Acad. 1969, p. 208 ff. and fn. 2 above.

11. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 512, s.v.

12. See P.V. Kane, History of dharmasāstra, II, Poona 1941, p. 292.

13. For (non-Vedic) rosaries made of *kuśa* see, e.g., Mayamata 12, 51 f.

2; HG. 1, 1, 23 etc. with differences in particulars)<sup>14</sup>. – KŚ. 2, 3, 30 f. (also 4, 2, 15) mentions two or three blades of *kuśa* cut off by means of a few other such blades. Likewise ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 1 ff., explaining the numbers as follows: in the human body the wind, being a purifier, becomes two or three breaths<sup>15</sup>. For the usual practice see e.g. KŚ. 9, 6, 9 on pouring milk into *soma* juice after keeping a pair of *kuśa* blades between (or within, i.e. upon the cup)<sup>16</sup>. – The *adhvaryu* performing the rites of the *soma* ceremony purifies the patron of the sacrifice by sprinkling him above and below the navel by means of seven *kuśa* purifiers<sup>17</sup> (KŚ. 7, 3, 1, see also ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 18 ff., using the compound *darbhāpavitra*: seven “because there are seven vital breaths in the head; there may even be three times seven, 21, such indeed is the numerical congruence (*sampad*)”)<sup>18</sup>.

The suitability of *kuśa* for this purpose is explained in ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 5 (using the word *darbhā*<sup>19</sup>): one strains through these strainers because they make the water ritually pure (*medhya*); the grasses of which the strainers are made have in the mythical past sprung from part of the (primeval) waters. Hence the statement in 1, 3, 1, 3 “the water is (represented by) *kuśa* grass” (*āpo hi kuśāḥ*); cf. 2, 2, 3, 11 where *āpo darbhāḥ* but in ŚBK. 1, 2, 3, 9 *āpaḥ kuśāḥ*; 2, 2, 4, 3.

ĀśvŚ. 2, 4, 13 mentions the cleansing of the *śrucaḥ* (wooden ladles for pouring ghee on the fire) by means of *kuśa* (plural); the contents of one of these ladles is poured upon a place where is *kuśa*.

When, for instance, in the *udakaśanti* (rite with propitiatory water) BGŚ. 1, 14 the priest is described as preparing this water (*śantiyudaka*, § 2) *pavitreṇa*, this means that he dips two blades of *kuśa* in it. See also § 3, 1. 4. – The one who performs the *yajñāvāstu* ceremony<sup>20</sup> has to dip *kuśa* three times into the sacrificial butter or food inviting the birds to lick what has been anointed, and then throws the grass into the fire with a prayer to Rudra for sparing “our cattle” (GG. 1, 8, 26 ff.; KhG. 2, 1, 25 ff.; ĀgnG. 2, 5, 6: 84, 16; cf. also GSP. 2, 1 f.). It may be remembered that to Rudra, the lord of cattle, the geese, eagles, hawks (and other) birds are assigned (AVŚ. 11, 2, 24). Are the birds in this rite supposed to act as mediators? or are they (partial) manifestations of the god?<sup>21</sup>

14. For other references and particulars see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 347 f.

15. For one strainer see, e.g., ŚB. 1, 7, 1, 9.

16. Hence the expressions *tiras pavitram ājyasthālyām ājyaṃ nirūpya* (BG. 1, 3, 11); *tiras pavitram sthālyām apah payo vāṇīya* (3, 7, 8).

17. For sprinkling with bunches of *kuśa* in Hinduist lustration rites (*nirājana*) see, e.g., ViDhP. 2, 50, 14: “the elephants are to be sprinkled with *śanti* water by means of the tops of bunches of *kuśa* and mantras that ward off demoniac powers” (cf. J. von Negelein, Der Traumschlüssel des Jagaddeva, Giessen 1912, p. 165 f.).

18. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 40 f.; on *sampad*, Prajāpati and the year, p. 50 ff., Amsterdam Acad. 1984, p. 50 ff.

19. See ch. V.

20. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 422.

21. The function of *kuśa* and other grasses in popular medicine and magic is not always clear at first sight. If, for instance, a person usually announces good or bad fortune as indicated by throbbings in his body one can cure him of this habit by striking the side of his body with *kuśa* (MārḥPur, 48, 16). Does the mere touching produce the result or a special virtue of the grass?

Fresh *kuśa* blades were also used to sprinkle water around the ritual fire (ŚG. 1, 8, 17); to sprinkle the sacrificial place before establishing the sacred fire (ĀśvG. 1, 3, 1; VG. 1, 2–8); the fuel and the *kuśa* which are placed ready for the domestic ritual (JG. 1, 1: 1, 3; ĀpDh. 1, 5, 15, 12); the bricks with which the great fireplace<sup>22</sup> is built (for that purpose their tips (*kuśāgrāṇi*) are dipped in clarified butter, KŚ. 17, 3, 20; cf. ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 3 “*darbha* is pure and ritually clean”<sup>23</sup>; to spirt out small portions of collyrium on the eyelashes (ŚG. 4, 15, 11 in a description of the *śravaṇā-karma*<sup>24</sup>), but one may readily imagine that in daily practice any grass could serve for such purposes<sup>25</sup> – the person performing the sacrifice for appeasement of evil (ĀgnG. 3, 7, 1 f.) anoints himself (his eyes) with ointment from the Trikakud (mountain) by means of such a *kuśa* stalk and places it afterwards on a bunch of *darbha*: 3, 7, 2: 155, 15; 17 –; to offer the contents of the so-called *phalacamasa*, i.e. the cup containing pounded figs etc. instead of *soma* (KŚ. 10, 9, 32 dealing with a particular *soma* sacrifice performed by a *kṣatriya* or a *vaiśya*; with some more details ĀpŚ. 12, 24, 5). The departure from the usual way appears to be due to the fact that this procedure was considered to have the character of an atonement<sup>26</sup>. *Kuśa* is also employed in the rite of atonement mentioned PB. 9, 9, 8; MŚ. 3, 6, 13; KŚ. 25, 12, 1: in case *soma* of which has been drunk and *soma* which has not (yet) been drunk come to be mixed, one should according to KŚ. make an offering of this *soma* with a *kuśataruṇa* (fresh *kuśa* blade, i.e. *darbhataruṇa*, comm.) on some coals that have been pushed within the enclosing sticks<sup>27</sup>.

22. I refer to Staal (ed.), *Agni*.

23. On the other hand, objects made of grass, wood etc. are purified by sprinkling them with consecrated water (LiPur. 98, 61).

24. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 422 f.; for sprinkling in general, *ibidem*, p. 127, and, e.g., A. King, *Holy water*, London 1926.

25. I have grave doubts about the correctness of the view (O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954, p. 139) that the blade of *kuśa*, by means of which queen Alindā took up and drank a drop of water with the result that she became pregnant, represented the fecundatory power of the waters, because the drop contained part of a medicinal pill. In the corresponding passage Jātaka 531, p. 281 the function of the *kuśa* is less clear.

26. Cf. I. Scheftelowitz, *Die Sündentilgung durch Wasser*, *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft* 17 (1914), p. 353 ff.

27. In illustration of the importance attached to the protective and purificatory functions of *kuśa* in the post-Vedic period the following passages may be briefly quoted. When Sītā had given birth to Rāma's sons Kuśa and Lava, the former was, according to Rām. 7, 58, 5 ff. to be wiped, i.e. sprinkled and purified by means of *kuśa* (plural) that had been “made right”, i.e. duly prepared and consecrated (*satkṛta*), by mantras; hence he was called Kuśa. The latter was purified by means of *lava* – which is explained as the lower part of plucked or clipped *kuśa* – and was hence given the name Lava (the commentator Rāma regards the *kuśamuṣṭi*, held by Vālmiki, as the upper part of the stalks). Vālmiki is explicitly said to perform this rite in order to protect the children against the demons. With this account Kālidāsa, *Ragh.* 15, 32, does not agree; the poet (Vālmiki) named the boys Kuśa and Lava because the uterine moisture of their bodies was wiped off by means of *kuśa* and a tuft of *lava* (which according to Mallinātha is the hair of a cow's tail). Another story is told in *Kathās.* 51, 88 ff.: when Sītā had given birth to Lava Vālmiki, thinking that this child had been carried off by a wild beast, created another child, “a pure babe of *kuśa* grass, resembling Lava, so that Sītā now had two sons”: a variant of the well-known motif of the tree or plant as a bestower or origin of children (A. Dietrich, *Mutter Erde*, in *Archiv f. Religionswiss.* 8, p. 16 ff. and others).

Places attesting to the custom to sit on *kuśa* are far from rare<sup>28</sup>. BŚ. 22, 11: 134, 2 “one should only spread blades of *kuśa* and anoint him (the patron of an *agnicayana*) on them”; ĀśvŚ. 1, 12, 8 “he (an officiant) should sit down to the south of the *āhavanīya* on *kuśa* (plural) while clasping his hands in a particular way<sup>29</sup>”. While teaching the Veda the *ācārya* should be seated on *darbha* or on a bunch of *kuśa* or *darbha* (ĀśvG. 3, 5, 11; HG. 1, 6, 9; ĀpG. 11, 7; MG. 1, 22, 13; BG. 2, 5, 38, prescribing the same posture for the student in 39). ViS. 73, 2 mentions seats covered with *kuśa* (*kuśottara*); in BGŚ. 2, 14, 2 one offers such a seat to the Supreme Soul (Mahāpuruṣa) who is being invoked. From the fact that this detail is often explicitly mentioned and is accompanied by several other ceremonial observances it appears that it was considered relevant, that the officiant or teacher could not be seated in some ordinary way<sup>30</sup>. See also Yājñ. 1, 229; AVPar. 30, 2, 2 seated on a seat of *kuśa* (*kauśam āsanam āśīnah*); 23, 13, 3 and 38, 1, 3 (*kuśāsana*)<sup>31</sup>.

When the *ācārya* is about to teach the student the Veda the latter has to kneel down with his right knee on young *kuśa* shoots at their roots (ŚG. 2, 7, 5). The supposition seems warranted that in the opinion of the authorities some power or energy was – in this way – transmitted to the youth, the kneeling pose (see also GG. 1, 3, 1; VG. 5, 25; BGŚ. 1, 10, 11; with the left knee BGŚ. 4, 3, 1)<sup>32</sup> expressing devotion and readiness to receive the sacred knowledge. The man who enters upon the life of a hermit<sup>33</sup> should place two blades of *kuśa* to the west of the fire with their tops to the east, above these a stone, and place the big toe of his right foot on this stone (VaikhDh. 2, 2: 122, 14).

In the chapter on the *mahāvratā* ritual it reads (ŚŚ. 17, 4, 5 f.): “They prepare a bunch (*kūrca*) of *muñja* and (... ca ... ca which sometimes expresses a contrast, “or” Caland<sup>34</sup>) *kuśa* for the *adhvaryu*; standing on this he makes his responds”. Since

28. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 162.

29. *samastapānyanguṣṭhaḥ*: “grasping with his left hand the palm of the right hand and with the right hand the thumb of the left” (comm.).

30. It is worth noticing that, e.g., according to one of the earliest Jaina collections of rules of conduct for one renouncing worldly life is the injunction “he should not sit down on green plants, but lie on the bare ground ...” (Āyāraṅga 1, 8, 7, 2 (241)).

31. There are many references to this custom in post-Vedic literature. In BhG. 6, 11 the man who wishes to attain the highest goal should set up a seat bestrewn with cloth, hide or *kuśa* (cf. ŚvU. 2, 8 ff.; MaiU. 6, 30 and see D.J. Hoens, in Pratiḍānam, Vol. F.B.J. Kuiper, The Hague 1968, p. 523 ff.). Some other instances chosen at random are: ViP. 3, 15, 17 *kuśa* grasses offered for a *viṣṭara* (a spread seat); MārKp. 6, 25 f. “brahmins, eagerly listening to religious texts, seated on ... hides of the black antelope, on *kuśa* grass and on seats made of *kuśa* grass”; 31, 40 “let the intelligent man give *kuśa* for a seat” (*śrāddha*); BhāgP. 1, 19, 17 “the (inspired) wise one was seated on *kuśa* grasses, the roots of which were turned eastward, facing the north, on the right bank (of a river)”; also Kāl. Ragh. 1, 95 lying on a bed of *kuśa* (in the hut of an ascetic); Kathāsar. 52, 244 “there he went through a severe penance without food, on a bed of *kuśa* grass (*kuśāstare*)”; cf. also 56, 315; 100, 49 and 101, 219 (*darbhastayane*); Lakṣmī Tantra 28, 39 (on a soft sheet of cotton, a hide or *kuśa*). See also B.A. Gupta, Hindu holidays and ceremonials, Calcutta and Simla 1919, p. XXXV and 126.

32. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 61; T. Ohm, Die Gebetsgebärden der Völker und das Christentum, Leiden 1948. For kneeling in this way in the post-Vedic period see, e.g., LiPur. 8, 87 “(the devotee) should sit with the knees on a level or kneel on one of his knees”.

33. Now see also J.F. Sprockhoff, in WZKSA 25 (1981), p. 19 ff. and esp. p. 67 ff.

34. W. Caland, Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra, Nagpur 1953, p. 478.



a *kūrca* is often used as a seat, this stand is no doubt more honourable than the mats, cushions or rolls of twisted grass (*br̥ṣī*)<sup>35</sup> for the use of the other participants (7). For these cushions loads of *kuśa* are laid down (17, 6, 6). See also 17, 14, 6; 17, 17, 4. However, according to PB. 5, 5, 11 f., the *adhvaryu* performs his task while standing on a plank (of *udumbara* wood (comm.)), which, meaning food, strength, abundance etc.<sup>36</sup>, is very auspicious, while the others are seated on bundles (*kūrca*) consisting of *kuśa* (i.e. *br̥ṣīḥ*, comm.; this word is also used at AiĀ. 1, 2, 4). (See also KS. 34, 5: 38, 23). Similarly KŚ. 13, 3, 1 stating that the other officiants are seated *br̥ṣīṣu* (i.e. *kūrceṣu*, comm., explaining “*kūrcas* made of *darbha*, particular seats”). TS. 7, 5, 8, 5 mentions that the *adhvaryu* mounts two *kūrcas* (or two planks of *udumbara*, ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 14), leaving the material unmentioned.

The sacrificer who intends to perform the *pravargya* ... spreads *kuśa* with its tops directed towards the east, in front of the *gārhapatya* hearth and places the vessels thereon (ŚB. 14, 1, 3, 1; see also KŚ. 26, 2, 9). – The use of *kuśa* grass in cases such as that described BŚ. 6, 25: 186, 11: when one is making the doorposts of the *havir-dhāna* (the shed for the two vehicles) one presses down a handful of *kuśa* (*kuśahasta* = *kuśamuṣṭī*) and weaves a sort of grass-mat (*darbhāṇa*) on which the post is to rest may be a technical affair, it is from the ritual point of view indispensable<sup>37</sup>.

*Kuśa* is one of the many forms of plant life that, together with *samī* wood, mustard, barley etc. etc., is thrown on a purified place on which, during the wedding ceremonies, water is consecrated (VāG. 14, 6)<sup>38</sup>. – See also ŚŚ. 17, 10, 14 (with the tips turned towards the east and north)<sup>39</sup>.

*Kuśa* was also employed as a cover or covering, for instance of cups or other vessels: ĀgnG. 3, 6, 2: 150, 19 (*kuśataruṇakaiḥ praticchādya*); 21; 3, 7, 3: 156, 20; 3, 92: 168, 20; BPit. 2, 1; 2, 6 (p. 2, 2 and 11, 10 Raabe, always in the above fixed phrase). When on the sacrificial place a mound has been made it is covered with fresh shoots of this grass (BŚ. 9, 1: 265, 15, *pravargya*<sup>40</sup>; 1, 10: 1, 13 (*agnicayana*; KS. 18, 3, 5; ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 1).

The fire-pan (*ukhā*) in which the fire is to be taken and conveyed (*agnicayana* ritual) is held up by means of two coverings, or pads (*iṇḍu*) made of grass (*muñjaraj-javaḥ*, KŚ.) that are wound around it (KŚ. 16, 5, 3 f.; ŚB. 6, 7, 2, 3). PG. 3, 7, 3 using the compound *kuśeṇḍu* prescribes the sacrificing of these objects in a fire that has been taken from wood which is on fire in case a servant has run away. Are these

35. See ch. XIV below.

36. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 109 f.

37. See also Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 100 on the sound-holes (Staal, Agni, I, p. 579) and MŚ. 2, 2, 3, 3, referring to the hole for the *yūpa* (1, 8, 2, 1 ff.).

38. Compare, e.g., LiPur. 8, 84 “A canopy should adorn the whole place. It should be furnished with roots, fruits, tender sprouts, *kuśa* grass and various flowers”.

39. In Hinduist worship *kuśa* is, for instance, used to make a place fit for a base of an image of a deity: “after smearing a plot of ground (*sthaṇḍila*) ... and strewing it with sand and *kuśa* (one should) place the ... statue on a throne” (Varāhamihira, BS. 60, 7). Buildings in which ceremonies are to take place or sheds are thickly strewn with *kuśa* (idem, 44, 4; 8).

40. See p. 26 above. See also J.J. Meyer, Trilogie altindischer Mächte und Feste der Vegetation, Zürich and Leipzig 1937, II, p. 167.

objects which have come into contact with fire just as the firewood expected to compel the servant to his master's will (compare the mantra)?<sup>41</sup>

A bond made of *kuśa* (*kauśi raśanā*, to support his begging bowl) belongs to the outfit of a *saṃnyāsīn* (ĀgnG. 2, 7, 11: 119, 7). Here again the special reference to *kuśa* implies that no ordinary grass or other plants may be used for this purpose. – The strings of the garlands (in the non-Vedic rites BGŚ. 2, 13, 4 and 2, 16, 5) for the images of Viṣṇu and Rudra are also made of *kuśa*.

A rope of *kuśa* (*kauśi raśanā*) is prescribed at KŚ. 6, 3, 15 to those who have to “gird” the sacrificial post (animal sacrifice; cf. ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 19 f.). At a later moment (ŚB. 3, 7, 4, 1) the *adhvaryu* has to make a noose for binding the victim by means of a double-plaited *kuśa* rope (KŚ. 6, 3, 27). If an animal is sacrificed on a domestic occasion<sup>42</sup> one winds a *kuśa* rope round a *palāśa* branch which is driven into the ground (PG. 3, 11, 1). ĀśvG. 4, 8, 15 describing the spit-ox sacrifice<sup>43</sup> mentions the erection of a fresh branch with leaves as a sacrificial post and the employment of two creeping plants (*vrataṭyau*) or *kuśa* ropes (*kuśarajjū*) as cords with which to bind the victim to the post.

It is clear that for these purposes stout cords or ropes are required. But the stoutness of the material is not the only reason why ParāśaraS. 9, 34 explicitly dissuades those concerned from binding cattle with ropes made of grasses other than *kuśa* or *kāśa*. These – and especially the *kuśa* grass – are supposed to possess a certain immaterial power. That is also the reason why, for instance, in the Hinduist *yaṣṭikākarṣaṇa* ceremony<sup>44</sup>, a tug of war, the use of a *kuśa* or *kāśa* rope is prescribed, which, after having been brought to a temple or a crossroads – another favourite place for magic or religious ceremonies – should be grasped by two groups of men in order to prognosticate the king's success in the year that has begun.

Garments made of *kuśa*, bark, or hides are worn by anchorites (ĀgnG. 2, 7, 10: 118, 12). – The wife of a sacrificer who has the *vājapeya* ritual performed has to wrap round herself, over her garment of consecration, a cloth or skirt of *kuśa* grass which is to propitiate the sacrifice (ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8)<sup>45</sup>.

In the description of the human sacrifice ŚŚ. 16, 12, 20 it reads: “Then they spread out for (i.e. under, *upastrñanti*) the man (i.e. the human victim to be immolated) a piece of cloth (not: a garment (Caland)) made of *kuśa*, one of silk (or of the vegetable substance called *tṛpā*)<sup>46</sup>, and a red one made of filaments”. This passage runs parallel with ŚŚ. 16, 3, 25 where those concerned are said to spread under the horse that is to be immolated a piece of cloth (*vāśas*), an upper garment (*adhivāśa*) and gold. From KŚ. 20, 6, 10 it appears that the horse is killed on the gold which is placed on the piece of cloth that is spread on a larger piece of cloth; the comm.

41. For palmyra potholders see Staal, Agni, I, p. 551. For a photo ibidem, p. 611.

42. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 433.

43. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 435 ff.

44. See, e.g. SkandaP. 10, 64 ff.; M.M. Underhill, The Hindu religious year, Calcutta 1921, p. 62; Meyer, Trilogie, II, p. 181 ff.

45. Which reminds us of garments consisting of bark, leaves, flowers etc. which are worn on the occasion of traditional European fertility festivals (cf. Meyer, Trilogie, III, p. 184, n. 2; 248).

46. See Sāyaṇa on ŚB. 5, 3, 5, 20; KŚ. 15, 5, 7 f.; Eggeling, Śat. Br. III, p. 85, n. 1 and TB. 1, 3, 7. 1 where the patron of the sacrifice is made to put on a *tṛpā* (garment).

adds that under that piece of cloth (a) *tr̥ṇa* is laid down<sup>47</sup>. The fourfold underlayer is to prevent any part of the sacrificial material from being spilt<sup>48</sup>. See also ŚB. 13, 2, 8, 1; 13, 5, 2, 1; BŚ. 15, 28: 232, 8 requiring a *barhis*, a gold plate (having a weight) of 100 *palas*, a hide, an upper garment and a cushion of *tr̥pā* (see above), and ĀpŚ. 20, 17, 8 and especially the explanation in TB. 3, 9, 20, where the undermost cloth is said to be an image of the earth and the gold an image of the sky and the sun. Does the *kuśa* of ŚŚ. 16 correspond (also) with the *tr̥ṇa* and the *barhis*, and the red cloth with the gold?

Among the elaborate directions for the erection of the sacrificial stake<sup>49</sup> is the placing of a handful of *kuśa* (*kuśamuṣṭi*) on it when it has been laid down with the top towards the east (an auspicious quarter) in front of the hole in which it is to be raised into an upright position (KŚ. 6, 2, 12; ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 3 speaking of *barhūṃsi* (measuring a handful, comm.)). On that grass the *adhvaryu* puts the chip of the stake. (Notice that the fiery energy (*tejas*) of the tree falls away with the first chip, TS. 6, 3, 3, 2, and that by throwing the chip one “plants (the stake) full of vigour” (ŚB. 8)). After having sprinkled water on the top, middle part and bottom of the stake and so on he throws the *kuśa* blades (KS. 18 now reads *barhūṃsi*, just like ŚB. 7, but the comm. identifies these explicitly with the above *kuśamuṣṭi*) to be “a seat of the Fathers” (VS. 6, 1) – for the underground part of the stake is sacred to the Fathers – and also to restore the normal situation in which the bottom part of a tree is established among plants (ŚB. 7). It should also be remembered that, while the *yūpa* represents the *axis mundi*, the grass may be thought to represent the (primeval, cosmic) waters.

Discussing the *punarādheya* (renewing of the sacred fires)<sup>50</sup> ŚBM. 2, 2, 3, 11 (*darbhah*) and ŚBK. 1, 2, 3, 9 (*kuśah*) inform us that – notwithstanding the fact that the fires are established in much the same way as before – the fire is taken from the *gārhapatya* by means of sacrificial grass (and not, as the first time, by means of firewood): one should avoid “sameness” (*jāmi*<sup>51</sup>) and a conflict (*samad*) and, moreover, produce Agni from out of the water which is represented by the grass<sup>52</sup> (ŚB). For this custom see also the detailed descriptions at BhŚ. 5, 19, 8 ff.; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11 ff. (both speaking of *darbha*). One should however remember the purificatory and propitiatory virtue of the grass which makes it specially suitable for the renewed establishment of the fires.

Grass is strewn around the ritual fire(s)<sup>53</sup> (see e.g. ŚG. 1, 8, 1 ff.). Dealing with

47. See p. 14 above.

48. See also Eggeling, ŚB. V, p. 320, n. 2.

49. I also refer to O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954, p. 41 ff.

50. H. Krick, *Das Ritual der Feuergründung*, Wien (Vienna) Acad. 1982, p. 514 ff.

51. Properly speaking, *jāmi* means related like brother and sister; a second piece of wood would be closely related to the first. Closely related persons are regarded as “identical” and as rivals. Therefore “sameness” (repetition of a rite in exactly the same way) should be possibly avoided (see e.g. ŚB. 1, 3, 2, 8; 9; 1, 5, 3, 8; 15 (it does not effect productiveness); 4, 3, 5, 11 and especially 2, 4, 4, 20). The renewing of the fire requires new material.

52. See p. 31 above; 46; 59; 60 ff.; 101.

53. As to the domestic rites see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 60 f.; 167; 347 (with particulars and references). For illustrations see the plates 37 B and 49 in Staal, *op. cit.*



*śrauta* rites KŚ. 2, 3, 6 and ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 22 use the term *tṛṇa*; in other cases, e.g. ŚBM. 1, 7, 3, 28; ŚBK. 2, 1, 2, 1; JB. 1, 362; TB. 3, 7, 6, 1 grass is strewn round the fire but no word for it is used (for *pariṣṭarāṇa* see also AVŚ. 9, 6, 2). At ŚB. 1, 7, 3, 28 the grass is, at the request of the sacrifice itself, to protect it from nakedness. Nakedness is often felt to be undesirable (e.g. ĀgnG. 2, 7: 104, 5; VaikhG. 5, 6: 80, 3) because the naked are unprotected against demons that might enter their bodies, or for fear of magical harm in general (cf. also Manu 4, 75; ViS. 70, 3; GautDh. 9, 60)<sup>54</sup>. So the strewing of the grass is an attempt to retain and concentrate the potency of the fire, just as for instance in some European countries (Sweden, the Netherlands) trees are wrapped in straw at Christmas time so that they shall bear heavily<sup>55</sup>. GG. 4, 2, 20 uses the term *darbhamaṣṭi* in a description of the *anvaṣṭakya* ritual<sup>56</sup>.

A sacrificer who wishes to perform the so-called *abhyātāna* sacrifices, overpowering rites aimed at adversaries (TS. 3, 4, 6) should procure vessels, firewood etc. etc. made of *parṇa* wood (the wood of this tree, also called *palāśa*, the *butea frondosa*, is regarded as sacred, see e.g. ŚB. 1, 7, 1, 1; 3, 3, 4, 10) and spread a *barhis* consisting of *kuśa* (BŚ. 14, 16: 181, 12 f.). Such a *barhis* is, together with *parṇa* firewood, also required for the *śantihoma* described in ĀgnG. 3, 7, 1: 154, 4 and 7.

For the erection of a mound for the deceased (*loṣṭaciti*) are required, among other things, four bunches or clumps of plants, viz. one of the terminalia *arjuna*, one of *dūrva*, one of *kāśa*<sup>57</sup>, one of *kuśa* (ĀgnG. 3, 8, 1: 160, 9; cf. also BGPit. 1, 17 ff.). These are, to the accompaniment of appropriate mantras, placed, respectively towards the east, the north, the west and the south (ĀgnG. 3, 8, 3: 164, 22 ff.). The last *stamba* (now called *darbhastamba*) is in the mantra said to be "the plant (*ośadhi*) that is dear to the Fathers, along with its root<sup>58</sup>, the joint of its stalk which sprinkles abundantly, then its fruit"<sup>59</sup>. When these bunches have been arranged a mess of boiled rice (*caru*) is placed in the middle and a *sūdahoma* (oblations of broth thrown into the fire) is performed. The Mādhyandinas have the mound covered with (grass-like) *avakā* plants (which are held to mean water, ŚB. 7, 5, 1, 11 etc.), i.e. *blyxa octandra* Roxb. (ŚB. 13, 8, 3, 13) and *darbha* (cf. also KŚ. 21, 3, 26 f.)<sup>60</sup>.

54. See also J.J. Meyer, *Sexual life in ancient India*, London 1930, p. 262.

55. O. von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Das festliche Jahr*, 1898, p. 460.

56. In Hinduism fuel and *kuśa* are indispensable requisites for sacrificing (cf., e.g., MärkPur. 21, 61 ff.). In modern Hinduist ritual practice, in which many elements of the ancient cult, particularly of those described in the *gṛhyasūtras* have survived side by side with younger elements, *kuśa* grass is still as *barhis* strewn around the *kuṇḍa* (round hole in the ground for receiving the ritual fire). The Hindus of Surinam, immigrants from Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar and adherents of the orthodox popular Hinduism, unable to procure *kuśa*, have replaced it by an indigenous grass called *mosonjo* (C.J.M. de Klerk, *Cultus en rituel van het orthodoxe Hindoeïsme in Suriname*, Thesis Leiden, Amsterdam 1951, p. 36).

57. *Dūrva* grass is often used in lustrations etc.; *kāśa* is in this text said to ward off the demons.

58. The roots, being chthonian, belong to the Fathers; see, e.g., Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 163 fn.; III, p. 71 fn.; 263 f. fn.

59. Reading and translation are somewhat uncertain.

60. For other particulars see W. Caland, *Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*, Amsterdam Acad. 1896, p. 161 f. Cf. also ĀpŚ. 21, 7, 9.

In performing the *śrāddha* ceremony described in ĀgnG. 3, 3, 2<sup>61</sup> one should fetch “honey” (*madhu*) with ṚV. 1, 90, 6–8 stating that the winds and rivers bring *madhu* and expressing the wish that the plants, the tree, the sky, the sun and the cows may give it; then one should take a fragment of *kuśa* and “churn” (*mathitvā*) the food with the mantras TS. 1, 8, 14, 1 a–e “thou art the glittering of *soma* ...; thou art *amṛta*, protect me from death ...” – used in the *rājasūya* ritual etc., see ĀpŚ. 18, 15, 5 e –, throw away the foam (scum) with *ibid.* f. “cast away is Namuci’s<sup>62</sup> head”, place (the food for the Fathers) on *darbha* (plural) and cover it with *darbha* (plural) and so on. The *kuśa* was apparently used as churn-staff.

In this connexion it is worth recalling that on the occasion of a *śrāddha*<sup>63</sup> or another ceremony in honour of the deceased the *kuśa* grass should have its roots. Intelligibly enough, because the roots and “that which has roots” belong to the Fathers: the top (*agram*) of sacrificial grass belongs to the gods<sup>64</sup>, the middle part to men, and the root-part (*mūlam*) to the Fathers (ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 17, *piṇḍapitryajña*). The author goes on to say: “therefore (the) stalks are cut off near the root”; see also TB. 1, 6, 8, 6 f.); see also “the Fathers are (homologous to) the world of plants (*śśadhilokaḥ*) and to the roots of plants they approach stealthily” (13, 8, 1, 20); “to the Fathers belongs the (sod) filled with roots” (13, 8, 1, 15); and, briefly, “what has roots belongs to the Fathers” (TB. 1, 6, 8, 7). Hence the injunction at GG. 1, 5, 17 “the (blades of the grass for the *barhis*) should be cut near the roots at (the ceremonies directed to) the Fathers”. Similarly, BhŚ. 8, 16, 10 (*samūlaṃ ... upamūlaṃ vā*); ĀpŚ. 8, 13, 11 f.<sup>65</sup> (the *pitryajña* following the *sākamedha*). This belief has survived in the post-Vedic period: see, e.g., Brahma-Purāṇa 219, 73 f. “on *kuśa* grasses with sesam seed and with their roots the incense, flowers etc. are to be placed, then (thereupon) the lumps of rice ...”<sup>66</sup>. Not infrequently it is explicitly stated that the grass should (with the roots) be severed with one cut (*sakṛḍācchinna*): ĀpŚ. 1, 7, 3 f.; KŚ. 4, 1, 11 (*upamūlaṃ s.*)<sup>67</sup>. Now, it is stated that the Fathers have passed away once for all (*sakṛt*: ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 9; 13; 19; 2, 6, 1, 6; 8; 14 and so on). That is why, according to the Śat. Br. “with one stroke the stalks of sacrificial grass are severed, because the Fathers have passed away once for all” (2, 4, 2, 17). It has aptly been observed<sup>68</sup> that, anyhow, the cutting of the grass should be executed quickly, because this action is dangerous, “unheimlich”, an encroachment upon the realm of the dead. Moreover, the so-called *kutapa*, i.e. grass that on the occasion of a *śrāddha* is, together

61. Compare Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 514 ff.

62. As to the demoniac Namuci see A.A. Macdonell, Vedic mythology, Strassburg 1897, p. 161 f. The verb *math-* is also used to denote the twirling off of Namuci’s head; Indra is also said to have cut off his head with foam.

63. The sacrifice of offerings of lumps of cooked rice to the Fathers; see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 444 (with n. 9).

64. Remember the sprinkling of clarified butter with the tops of *kuśa* (KŚ. 17, 3, 20).

65. See Caland’s notes, Śr. Āp. II, p. 43.

66. For some relevant quotations from Hemādri, Caturvargacintāmaṇi see Meyer, Trilogie, III, p. 263, n. 1.

67. See, e.g., also BhŚ. 1, 7, 8; ĀpŚ. 1, 7, 13; 1, 10, 13; HŚ. 2, 7, 62; ŚŚ. 4, 5, 10; ĀśvŚ. 2, 6, 10; KG. 18, 1 and TB. 3, 7, 4, 10.

68. Meyer, Trilogie, I. cit. See also p. 23 (with fn. 57) above.

with *kuśa* and *dūrva*, used as a *pavitra* for forming a seat, for strewing around or for purification (BG. 2, 11, 63), should also be cut with the roots (Hemādri, Cat. III, 1, p. 637)<sup>69</sup>. For rites performed for the gods one should use *kuśa* without the roots (ibid. III, 1, p. 638).

The *kuśa* stalks which are put on the seats of the brahmins representing the deceased ancestors are broken in the middle; both parts are laid end to end in such a way that the upper part has also roots (*dviguṇabhagna*, Hemādri, Cat. III, 1, p. 1217 f.; 1253; 1257) in contrast to stalks that are laid down in rites performed for the gods: then they are put down in a straight line (*ṛju*). Hence the direction: “until the *sapīṇḍīkaraṇa* (the rite by means of which a deceased person is received into the group of the ancestors who are entitled to the *piṇḍa* offerings) the stalks should be placed straight, after that rite twofold (*dviguṇa*, i.e. “in such a manner that their roots and tops are joined together”, BrPur. 219, 54, cf. ViPur. 3, 16, 19 *darbhān dvidhākṛtān*)” (Hemādri, Cat. III, 1, p. 639; 1585).

Another employment of *kuśa*, no doubt a customary daily practice, but significantly prescribed in a ritual manual, occurs in ĀśvŚ. 2, 3, 20: the performer of the *agnihotra* should leave most of the oblation in the ladle and shake it three times (on the place where the libation is to be made), wipe off what adheres to the ladle with his (left) hand and then wipe off (with a downward movement) the remnants which adhere to his hand on the roots of *kuśa* with the mantra “for the cattle thee”<sup>70</sup>. In this case also the rite was capable of variation: according to BŚ. 3, 6, 12 the *adhvaryu* has to wipe off his hand on (the) plants (*ośadhīṣu*) with the mantra “for the plants thee!; refresh the plants”; to MŚ. 1, 6, 1, 44 he rubs it upon the *darbha* plants with the words “refresh the plants”; to ĀpŚ. 6, 11, 4 he wipes away the remnant (with his finger) and rubs it upon the ground to the south of the *vedi* with the mantra “*svadhā* to the Fathers!, refresh the Fathers” (similarly, HŚ. 3, 7, 89: 350 f.); to KŚ. 4, 14, 20 he rubs it upon the bundle of grass (*kūrca*). All variants are perfectly legitimate. Notice however that in contrast to the plants (in BŚ.), which get “personal benefit” from the rite, the *kuśa*, the *darbha* and the ground are supposed to transmit the blessing to the plants or the Fathers.

That *kuśa* was regarded as something auspicious appears, e.g., from ĀśvG. 2, 7, 4: one should build a house on a spot where much *kuśa* and (the fragrant) *vīraṇa* grass (*andropogon muricatus*, used as an amulet and in exorcising demons, Kauś. 26, 26; 25, 30 etc.) grows and remove plants with thorns and with milky juice<sup>71</sup>. On the occasion of a *śrāddha* one should offer to the brahmins present *kuśa*, sesame, clothes, flowers, ornaments, incense, lamps<sup>72</sup> (ViDh. 73, 12). Because of this character the bunches of *kuśa* were also employed – together with the auspicious *samī*

69. However, SB. 7, 4, 2, 13 mentions the ritual use of plants (*ośadhi*) with tops and roots “for the sake of completeness”. Notice also that TS. 5, 6, 4, 2 speaks of a bunch of *darbhā*, but ĀpŚ. 16, 17, 7 of *darbha* with its roots (*agnicayana*); see also ĀpŚ. 19, 11, 6. – Also BhŚ. 1, 5, 11; ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 12. At MG. 1, 12, 2 the hair of the bride is combed with *darbha* that has its root: probably in order to prevent the falling out of the hair (cf. AVŚ. 6, 136, 3; AVP. 1, 67, 3).

70. See also P.E. Dumont, L’agnihotra, Baltimore 1939, p. 172.

71. Cf., e.g., also BhPit. 1, 1, 6.

72. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 120 f.; 142 ff.; 122 f.; 145; 140 etc.

wood and the purifying cowdung<sup>73</sup> and so on – in a rite to get rid of the contamination caused by the death of a guru (ĀśvG. 4, 6, 4), the young women in the house should use them to salve their eyes (§ 11).

In the *śimantonnayana* rite (the dividing of a woman's hair) three bunches of *kuśa* are together with an auspicious porcupine's quill and a bunch of unripe fruits – which, suggesting ripening, is no doubt expected to enhance the woman's fecundity – used as instruments (ĀśvŚ. 1, 14, 4; ŚG. 1, 22, 8 prescribes a *darbha* needle and unripe *udumbara* fruits which signify abundant thriving)<sup>74</sup>. The *prastara* grass for the *vaiśvadeva* ceremonies, which take place in spring, is for a similar reason made of blossoming *kuśa* (because these are "generative" (*prajanana*), ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 18; by means of blossoms one secures prosperity, TB. 1, 6, 3, 2): KŚ. 5, 1, 26, prescribing also the use of two fresh *kuśa* blades for churning the fire (§ 29 f.). See also ĀpŚ. 8, 1, 10; BhŚ. 8, 1, 13; ĀgnG. 3, 7, 1: 154, 4; 7. Notice that the word *prasū* "blossoming (grass)" means also "productive, giving birth" (with respect to the sacrificer's wife and cattle).

However, Kauś. 50, 3 advises those who wish to undertake a prosperous journey to cut off (ordinary) *trṇāni* (or any grass?) (and to throw these in their house or on their land, Keśava, specifying "*darbha* and so on").

When the patron of a soma sacrifice is consecrated the *adhvaryu* has to place *inter alia* a blade of fresh *kuśa* (*kuśataruṇam*, explained as *sūkṣmaṃ kuśāgraṃ darbhataruṇakam*, comm.) on the right side of his hair with the mantra "protect, O plant" (*oṣadhe trāyasva*): KŚ. 7, 2, 10; VS. 4, 1; ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 7 explaining: "For the razor is a thunderbolt, and thus that thunderbolt ... does not injure him, therefore he (also says:) "O axe (*svadhīte*) do not injure him"". The same mantras are pronounced, when a *kuśataruṇa* is placed crosswise on the point of the tree where one intends to strike it in order to obtain a sacrificial stake (the *kuśa* is to be struck first: *trṇasyopari praharati*, comm. KŚ.): KŚ. 6, 1, 12; VS. 5, 42; ŚB. 3, 6, 4, 10; also in connexion with the shaving of the patron's hair and beard at the end of the seasonal sacrifices (ŚB. 2, 5, 2, 48; 2, 6, 2, 19; 2, 6, 3, 17): KŚ. 5, 2, 15 (mentioning three blades). Remarkably enough, KŚ. 6, 6, 8 f. dealing with the immolation of the animal victim and prescribing the same mantras (VS. 6, 15), prefers, like ŚB. 3, 8, 2, 12, (ordinary) *trṇam* to *kuśataruṇam*<sup>75</sup>. PG. 2, 1, 10 uses the latter term and the same mantra (VS. 4, 1) in connexion with the tonsure of a young boy (*cūḍākarāṇa*)<sup>76</sup>.

73. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 111 etc.; p. 106 etc.

74. For other differences etc. see J. Gonda, The *śimantonnayana*, East and West 7 (1956), p. 12 ff. (= Selected Studies, Leiden 1975, p. 186 ff.).

75. See p. 32 above.

76. Passing mention may be made of W. Wüst's attempt (Rhema 2, München 1956), p. 77 ff. to derive the adjective *kuśala* "right, proper, in good condition, healthy, clever, skilful etc." – which does not occur in the *samhitās* and is only a few times found in the *brāhmaṇas* (AiB. 7, 18; ŚB. 11, 4, 2, 1; 4; 13, three times in the same ritual context) – from *kuśa*. He regards the expression *kuśalīkr-*, in ĀśvG. 1, 17, 17; 1, 19, 10; GG. 2, 9, 25; 2, 10, 7; JG. 1, 11: 10, 3, always used in connexion with the *caula* ritual or with the ritually correct head-dress, as the connecting link, translating it by "to shear". However, the traditional translation ("to arrange well") could in this context do just as well: "to act in such a way that (the hair, or some other object of ritual importance?) is

So much for the texts of the White Yajurveda. Other authors use a somewhat longer mantra, viz. "... protect him (or it, *enam*)" and differ in another, more important, respect. With the exception of the ṛgvedic gṛhyasūtras ĀśvG. 1, 17, 8 and ŚG. 1, 28, 12, which in connexion with the tonsure of the boy use the compounds *kuśapīṅṅūlāni*<sup>77</sup> and *kuśataruṇam* respectively, the other works, mainly śrautasūtras of the (older<sup>78</sup>) Black Yajurveda, prefer different terms instead of *kuśa*. Thus in the chapter on the sacrificial post BŚ. 4, 1: 107, 19 speaks of *barhis*, BhŚ. 7, 1, 13 of *ośadhi* "plant, herb", ĀpŚ. 7, 2, 4; VārŚ. 1, 6, 1, 9 and MŚ. 1, 8, 1, 6 of *darbha* (TS. 6, 3, 3, 2 and KS. 3, 2: 26, 17 do not mention the grass); in that on the immolation of the victim BŚ. 4, 6: 119, 4 and BhŚ. 7, 14, 8 f. of *barhis* (as to ĀpŚ. cf. 7, 18, 12 referring to 7, 12, 5 where *barhis*), MŚ. 1, 8, 4, 7 and VārŚ. 1, 6, 5, 19 of *darbha*; in that on the shaving of the patron of the sacrifice BŚ. 6, 2: 157, 9 has again *barhis*, BhŚ. 10, 3, 12 *darbhapiṅṅūlāni*, ĀpŚ. 10, 5, 8 probably following MS. 3, 6, 2: 61, 5 *trṇam*, MŚ. 2, 1, 1, 22 *darbha*. In connexion with the tonsure of a boy HG. 2, 6, 7 uses the general term *ośadhi* (which occurs also in connexion with the student of the Veda taking his concluding bath, 1, 9, 13), JG. 1, 11: 9, 7; GG. 2, 9, 14 and KhG. 2, 3, 24 *darbhapiṅṅūli* (plural), MG. 1, 21, 4; KG. 40, 11 and VārG. 4, 9 *darbha*. Describing the *vaśāsamana* ritual<sup>79</sup> Kauś. 44, 29 f. uses, in connexion with the immolation, the word *darbha*.

In some of the above texts the purpose in employing the grass and (or) pronouncing the mantra is explicitly indicated: according to TS. 6, 3, 3, 2 (sacrificial post) and 6, 3, 9, 1 f. (immolation) it is *śānti*, i.e. "appeasement, soothing", because the axe and the knife are thunderbolts; to MS. 3, 6, 2: 61, 3 (shaving); 3, 9, 3: 115, 18 (the post); 3, 10, 1: 129, 1 (immolation) *trāti*, i.e. protection, and with special reference to the *trṇa* (*sic*, MS. 3, 6, 2: 61, 5) *ahimsā*, i.e. safety from injury<sup>80</sup>, see also 115, 19 and 129, 3 and compare ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 7 etc.; KS. 26, 3: 124, 23 (the post) *varman* "defence" and *ahimsā*.

According to AVPar. 21, 1, 2 the sages have said that fresh blades of *kuśa* the tops of which have not been cut off and whose splendour is like that of sapphires and likewise dry blades of *kuśa* with a white colour<sup>81</sup> cause appeasement (of evil, *śānti*); that is, they bring about that situation, in which all forms of evil are rendered

characterized by, furnished with *kuśa* grass", hence to "arrange (it) well" (on the suffix *-la-* see J. Wackernagel and A. Debrunner, *Altind. Grammatik II*, 2, Göttingen 1954, p. 864, rejecting this etymology that was already proposed by Indian grammarians). It is to be regretted that there are no clear occurrences of *kuśala* in the sense of "furnished with *kuśa*" in other contexts. Or do the above places ŚB. 11, 4, 2, 1 etc. point in that direction (cf., e.g., ĀśvŚ. 2, 3, 20, p. 39 above).

77. The second element, *piṅṅūla*, *puṅṅūla*, *piṅṅūli* etc., gives the impression of a popular word characterized by instability and more or less individual variation of its outward form (L. Spitzer, Hugo Schuchardt-Brevier, Halle (S.) 1928, p. 240 ff.; E. Sapir, *Language*, New York 1921, p. 157 ff.; see also J. Wackernagel, *Kleine Schriften*, Basel 1953, I, p. 689).

78. J. Gonda, *Vedic literature*, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 332, see also P. Thieme, *Pāṇini and the Veda*, Allahabad 1935, p. 63 ff.; 75 f.

79. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 407.

80. I refer to J. Gonda, *Four studies in the language of the Veda*, 's-Gravenhage 1959, ch. III.

81. The white colour is favourable or auspicious. For colours and their homoeopathic significance and application see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 45 ff.



harmless and inoffensive, all dangerous influences are neutralized, all threatening demons are warded off<sup>82</sup>. This explains, at least to a considerable extent, the custom to hold *kuśa* in the right hand while performing a ritual ceremony. "Muttering (of sacred texts), burnt-offerings (*homa*) and ceremonies in honour of the Fathers" should be carried out in this way (AVPar. 23, 10, 7)<sup>83</sup>. Śātātapa, in the Smṛticandrikā, I, p. 108 adds study of the Veda and the presentation of gifts<sup>84</sup>. While learning (reciting) Vedic texts the student should "grasp round *kuśa* shoots in their middle with his hands" (ŚG. 2, 7, 6; see also ĀśvG. 3, 2, 2)<sup>85</sup>; cf. also Manu, 2, 75<sup>86</sup>. AVPar. 42, 1, 5 enjoins the twice-born man who is performing the bathing ritual to do likewise<sup>87</sup>. In connexion with the spreading of a particular *barhis* (BŚ. 6, 24: 183, 18) Aupamanyava (21, 14: 94, 16) observed that this had to take place *kuśahastaḥ* and while moving towards the east. See also 6, 25: 186, 11. When the youth who is to be initiated has to tread upon a stone<sup>88</sup> he is, according to the commentator Brāhmaṇabala, not only wearing the sacred thread, but has also sipped water for purification and is holding a *pavitra* (in the form of *kuśa*) in his hand (KG. 41, 8)<sup>89</sup>. – The man who does not cohabit with his wife in her *ṛtu* period must, being seated with *kuśa* in his hand, suppress his breath, recite purificatory texts and so on (BaudhDh. 4, 1, 22). A similar penance is inflicted on those whose guilt has not been made public (VāsDh. 25, 4).

Mention is also made of a ring-like loop (called *pavitra*) in one's right hand or in both hands on the third (ring-)finger<sup>90</sup>: such an amulet is, e.g., worn by a bridegroom who is about to accept a girl as his bride (ĀgnG. 1, 6, 1: 35, 7 (cf. Kauś. 76, 8). In making an oblation that finger is to be covered with *kuśa*, *balbaja* or *muñja* (AVPar. 28, 1, 3)<sup>91</sup>.

These customs are no doubt based upon the belief that *kuśa* grass purifies and protects the person who holds or wears it and appeases or counteracts evil and thwarting influences. ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8 (cf. KŚ. 14, 5, 3 f.) dealing with the *vājapeya*

82. D.J. Hoens, Sānti, Thesis Utrecht, The Hague 1951; Gonda, Vedic ritual, ch. XVIII.

83. See also L.P. van den Bosch, Atharvaveda-Parīṣiṣṭa ch. 21–29. Thesis Utrecht 1978, p. 70, n. 160.

84. For later authorities see also Kane, Hist. of Dharmasāstra, II, p. 657. See also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 469.

85. Brahmā's image should hold a waterjar (*kamaṇḍalu*) and *kuśa* in his two left hands (Mayamata, 36, 5).

86. According to Patañjali, Mah. 1, p. 39, 1. 10 f. Pāṇini formulating a *sūtra* held grass in his hand.

87. For a similar custom in SkandaPur. VII, 1, 206, 17 see Kane, op. cit., IV, p. 418. For other places see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 115.

88. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 381.

89. Explaining the right methods of sipping water and ablution LiPur. 25, 26 ff. prescribes holding *pavitra* in the hand and sprinkling *kuśa* water (see below, p. 47) on one's body.

90. I refer to Kane, l. cit. – It may also be recalled that the Indian artist who, also in the post-Vedic period, worked within a strictly delineated tradition, should not only know the relevant mantras and wear the sacred thread and a necklace of holy beads but also on his finger "a ring of sacred *kuśa* in the worship of (his) god", Mānasāra Śilpaśāstra 1 (P. Kumar Acharya, Architecture of Mānasāra, London 1933).

91. Rings, called *pavitra*, can up to the present day serve similar purposes, e.g., when one is making a *saṃkalpa*, i.e. the formulation of the intention to be ritually engaged, goes on pilgrimage etc. See, e.g., also Kathāsar. 24, 96 " ... he went in the presence of the god, making *kūrcas* of *kuśa* grass (to be worn on his fingers) and muttering prayers, sitting in the lotus-posture ..."

ritual is quite clear on this point. One of the officiants, the *neṣṭar*, being about to lead up the wife of the patron, “makes her wrap round herself, over the garment of consecration (cf. ĀpŚ. 10, 9, 11; 16), a cloth, a skirt, made of *kuśa*”, because he wants her, thus coming forward, to propitiate the sacrifice. But because that part of a woman which is below the navel is impure he cannot cause her to do so before he has made that part pure by means of that grass (now called *darbhāḥ*) which is pure<sup>92</sup>.

Hence also the brief statement in KŚ. 1, 3, 12 *kausam barhiḥ* “the term *barhis* means (merely) (the object consisting of the) *kuśa* grass”, i.e. it is already denoted by that name, if it is mere *kuśa*, not specially prepared for a sacred purpose; “it needs no *saṃskāra*”<sup>93</sup> (comm.). But whereas Śāliki was of the opinion that the *barhis* should consist of “self-cut” (*svayamdina*, BŚ. 12, 6: 92, 15) grass, Bauddhāyana taught that the grass should be crushed by a cow (BŚ. III, 141, 12)<sup>94</sup>.

Other places worth mentioning are TB. 1, 3, 7, 1 “he causes (the patron) to put on (a garment) of *darbha* (*darbhamayaṃ paridhāpayati*), *darbha* (plur.) is a means of purifying (*pavitram vai darbhāḥ*)”; BDh. 1, 5, 4 introduces the section on the sacred thread (*yajñopavīta*) as follows: “We shall explain (the rules) of external purification”.

A *snātaka* (an accomplished student returning home) should seek to dwell in a place where firewood, water, fodder, *kuśa* etc. exist in abundance (GDh. 9, 65), the *kuśa* no doubt to perform the rites of purification by himself (ĀpDh. 1, 5, 15, 22). He is, on the other hand, not allowed to wipe the dirt from his feet with blades of *kuśa* (ViS. 71, 38), no doubt for fear that he should defile something that is normally associated with religious rites.

An interesting custom is described in ŚG. 2, 7, 6 f. etc.: the fresh *kuśa* shoots on which the student who is about to ask his teacher for instruction has knelt (§ 5)<sup>95</sup> are thereupon grasped (round) by him in their middle with his hands, the right uppermost, and grasped (thoroughly) by the teacher with his left hand at their tops; with his right hand he sprinkles them with water. When the lesson is finished the teacher (thus the comm.) takes the *kuśa* shoots (§ 28), makes a pit at their roots by means of cow-dung and sprinkles water on them in proportion to (the number of) the *sūktas* (the student has recited). With regard to the last words the commenta-

92. According to Mayamata 18, 181 the axis of the motif of the cornice of a temple should be “adorned” (this includes protected) by means of new cloth that is interwoven with *kuśa*. The belief in the protective and purificatory properties of *kuśa* and *dūrvā* continues to exist. When (about 100 years ago) the eldest daughter of a Kakatia family (Conjeeveram) was dedicated to a deity, she was taken to a temple; a plantain leaf is placed on the ground and on it some raw rice; on that a brass vessel containing water, mango leaves and *darbha*; mantras are recited and the water together with the leaves and grass is thrown over the girl, who, moreover, had to swallow a pill of the five products of the cow for purification (F. Fawcett, in J. Anthropol. Soc. of Bombay, 2 (1892), p. 322 ff.). — “Confectioners, who are obliged to keep large quantities of cooked food ready, relieve themselves and their customers from the taboo by keeping some of the sacred *kuśa* or *dūrvā* grass in their vessels when an eclipse is expected” (N.M. Penzer, The ocean of story, being C.H. Tawney’s translation of Somadeva’s Kathā Sarit Sāgara, II, Delhi 1968, p. 82).

93. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 364.

94. For the advantages of physical contact with a cow I refer to Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 99.

95. See p. 33 above.

tor Nārāyaṇa observes that according to some authorities these water oblations were intended for the ṛṣis of the hymns recited. Oldenberg<sup>96</sup> was inclined to regard ŚG. 4, 6, 6 as a corroborative parallel (similar oblations on the first day of the month Māgha, when the study is interrupted<sup>97</sup>). I cannot, however, escape the conviction that this purpose of the sprinkling is a secondary and (together with the adverb *yathāsūktam*?) an additional one; that another explanation is within the range of possibility; and that the original meaning of the whole rite had probably fallen into oblivion with the ancient authorities. Is there no room for the supposition that the tubular *kuśa* stalks formed a 'mystic bond' between teacher and pupil on the one hand and were a means of transmitting a certain energy, *in casu* the power inherent in the texts taught by means of contact on the other?<sup>98</sup> It is in any case worth noticing that in the parallel sections found in the other gṛhyasūtras there are many references to the significance of a close contact between teacher and student. Nobody is allowed to walk between a teacher and a student engaging in study of the Veda (ŚG. 4, 8, 18). They should look at each other (PG. 2, 3, 3); the student should embrace the feet of his teacher (HG. 1, 6, 10; ĀpG. 11, 8 with his right hand the right foot; BG. 2, 5, 39)<sup>99</sup>; on a particular occasion they eat together (GG. 3, 3, 6 f.)<sup>100</sup>. Moreover, the *ācārya* had already at an earlier moment, whilst pronouncing the consecratory mantra "I initiate thee", touched with his hands the boy's shoulders (HG. 1, 5, 8; other texts enjoin the former to grasp the pupil's hand(s): ŚG. 2, 2, 11, PG. 2, 2, 17 etc.); a gesture that must no doubt be understood as an imposition of hands endowing the pupil with a certain quality or transmitting to him some form of power or energy. Is a similar significance of the position of the teacher's and pupil's hands on the *kuśa* stalks in ŚG. 2, 7, 6 f. entirely inconceivable? Had not the new garment with which the *ācārya* clothed his pupil at the beginning of the initiation ceremonies (JG. 1, 12: 10, 7)<sup>101</sup> the same function: "We clothe, O Soma (Indra, Poṣa<sup>102</sup>), this (boy) with *brahman* for the sake of great sacred knowledge (dominion, prosperity (*paśa*))"?

It seems worth while to call attention to some other uses of stalks or rods which to a certain extent are comparable to that of the *kuśa* in ŚG. 2, 7, 6 f. With the Romans slaves were, in the ceremony of manumission, touched with a *festuca* "stalk, stem, straw" (e.g. Gaius, Inst. 4, 16)<sup>103</sup>. The purport of this ceremony was to all appearance analogous to the imposition of hands which could likewise result in manumission and to the function of the *sagmina* – the word is etymologically related

96. Oldenberg, Gṛhya-sūtras, I, p. 73, n.

97. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 468.

98. In general, Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 82 ff.; on ŚG. 4, 8, 18 see p. 87.

99. Notice also that the student should take hold of his teacher when the latter sacrifices (ĀśvG. 1, 22, 13; 3, 5, 10; see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 85).

100. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 335 etc.

101. Compare also HG. 1, 4, 6, ff.; KG. 41, 5 ff.

102. According to the social class of the boy.

103. See H. Wagenvoort, Roman dynamism, Oxford 1947, p. 22 ff. (with references). For the rod in antiquity: F.J.M. de Waele, The magic staff or rod in Graeco-Italian antiquity, Thesis Nijmegen, Gent 1927 (as to the *festuca*, p. 128 ff.).

to *sacer* “dedicated or consecrated to a divinity, holy, sacred”<sup>104</sup> – “the tuft of herbs plucked within the Roman citadel by the consul or praetor and regarded as sacred, by bearing which the persons of the Roman ambassadors became inviolable”: another instance of transmission of power, or of a certain quality or dignity. See Livius, 1, 24, 4 ff. relating that when on a certain occasion king Tullus wished to conclude a treaty with the Albani, an undefiled (pure) green blade of grass (*graminis herba*) was fetched to be used as *sagmina* by means of which – now called *verbena* “twigs, branches, leaves or laurel etc., (sacred) foliage or herbage” – head and hair of a certain Fusius were touched by one of the priestly authorities in order to create him ambassador.

As to the direction given in ŚG. 2, 7, 28, viz. the placing of the *kuśa* shoots in cowdung etc., was this rite perhaps a variant of the well-known magic or ritual procedure known as conjoined growth of tree and man?<sup>105</sup> The experience of the specific power of trees and plants in their constantly repeated defeat of death led men to assume the possibility of a favourable influence exerted by trees etc. upon the duration of their own lives, for instance by planting a tree at the birth of a child. Remember also, for instance, the close association of trees with the Buddha<sup>106</sup>, with wisdom, spiritual illumination<sup>107</sup>. It would therefore seem probable that the motive inducing the above action was the belief that the continued growth of the *kuśa* shoot which has served as a means of transmitting knowledge of the Veda to the pupil also contributed to its development. If this explanation is substantially correct, it may probably also apply to the direction given to a teacher who together with his pupils intends to study the Veda in ĀśvG. 3, 5, 11: he should sit down on *darbha* and put *darbha* blades into a water-pot, join the hollowed hands (make the *brahmājali*) and repeat Vedic texts. According to VārG. 5, 25, however, the teacher should fold his hands in which he holds *kuśa* whilst reciting the sections of the Veda.

As to the two blades of grass (KŚ. 9, 6, 36, cf. 38) or the handful of *kuśa* (KŚ. 9, 7, 1; see also BhŚ. 13, 17, 12; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 7) which the *adhvaryu* hands over to the *prastotar*, thereby initiating the chanting of the *pavamāna* stanzas, this custom may, I think, be regarded as comparable to the above transmission of power: it is an authorization; the *prastotar* is given authority to commence the chanting.

Occasionally the use of *kuśa* grass is prescribed almost to excess. In the rite regarding the holy syllable *om̐* described in BGŚ. 3, 1, 2 ff. one should, on a place where the animals of the village are no longer heard, near water, have made a hut that faces the east and has one pillar of a *brahmavṛkṣa* (*ficus glomerata*). Then one should, with a *kuśa* banner<sup>108</sup>, in an enclosure of *kuśa*, wearing a garment made of

104. Notice the suffix *-men-*, which like Skt. *-man-*, often forms nouns denoting some (religious or “philosophical”) power or other (Latin *numen, carmen*, Skt. *brahman, dhāman* etc.).

105. Which at the time was recognized by W. Mannhardt, *Wald- und Feldkulte*, (1875-1879) 2Berlin 1904-1905.

106. Cf. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, p. 195; 199 ff. and passim; M. Éliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris 1949, 31975 (= *Patterns in comparative religion*, New York 1958), ch. VIII.

107. See, e.g., H. Bergema, *De boom des levens in Schrift en historic*, Thesis Vrije Univ. Amsterdam 1938.

108. A banner (*dhvaja*) as a mark of yogins or ascetics. The word *Kuśadhvaja* occurs also as a proper name.

*kuśa*, invested with a sacred thread that consists of *kuśa*, seated on *kuśa*, holding *kuśa* in the hand, having a girdle made of *kuśa* ..., lying on *kuśa* ..., in a standing position and facing the sun, 5000 times mutter the syllable *om*.

In this connexion mention may also be made of the custom to place a bundle of *kuśa* in the middle of the space of ground on which the great fireplace is to be built<sup>109</sup> after (KŚ. 17, 3, 1; ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 1) or before (ĀpŚ. 16, 17, 7 stating that the *kuśa* should have its roots; cf. BŚ. 10, 24: 23, 9) this site has been or will be ploughed. *Darbha* represents pure water (ŚB. § 2). According to ŚB. § 4 and Āp. one thereupon offers on the *darbha*, for various reasons, among others, because the ghee offered is the life-sap of both water and plants; according to TS. 5, 6, 4, 2 one offers on a *darbhastamba*, the *darbha* (plural) being *amṛtam*, i.e. (the draught of) "immortality" and *vīryam* (virtue-and-energy) of the earth the result being that one is propagated; according to ŚB. § 2 the *darbha* plants contain both kinds of food, because they are both water and plants. The *kuśa* is placed in the middle because this is considered to represent the centre of the universe and any new building is in a way a repetition of the construction of the universe, and also because there should exist a fixed and regular correspondence between the ritual system and the structure of the universe<sup>110</sup>. As to the ploughing which is elaborately discussed in ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 1 ff. it is said (§ 7) to mean food and to mark out the "body of the site" (§ 8); on the furrows seeds of plants are scattered to win food (TS. 5, 2, 5, 5; ŚB. 7, 2, 4, 13 f.; ĀpŚ. 16, 19, 13 f.; MŚ. 6, 1, 6, 1). As is well known, the practice of marking out a settlement with the plough was also known in other countries (Rome, Indonesia)<sup>111</sup>. There is in some respects a remarkable resemblance between the above passages and Ovidius' description (Fasti, 4, 821 ff.) of the foundation of Rome by Romulus: he marked out the city walls with the plough and made a deep furrow in which fruits of the earth (*fruges*) were thrown. For some different particulars see MŚ. 6, 1, 5, 33 f. enjoining to put a piece of (always auspicious) gold on a bundle of *darbha*<sup>112</sup> in the middle of the designed fireplace, to offer on it, and to touch the earth – i.e. to participate in her invigorating power<sup>113</sup> – in that middle.

Those who are engaged in preparing the *āhavaniya* fireplace (*agnicayana* ritual) have at a later moment to make the so-called *uttaravedi*<sup>114</sup> on the above (KŚ. 17, 3, 1) bunch of *kuśa* root (KŚ. 17, 3, 14; for details see also ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 27 which makes no mention of the *kuśa*). Then sand, which represents seed (*retas*, 7, 1, 1, 10; 7, 3, 1, 9; 7, 3, 1, 28 etc.)<sup>115</sup>, is thrown on it; remember that the *kuśa* grass represent the waters (7, 2, 3, 2).

109. For this ceremony see Staal, Agni, p. 387 ff.

110. See M. Eliade, The sacred and the profane, New York 1959 (1961), p. 36 ff.; J. Gonda, Die Bedeutung des Zentrums im Veda, in Sehnsucht nach dem Ursprung (Vol. in honour of M. Eliade, edited by H.P. Duerr), Frankfurt M. 1983, p. 374 ff.

111. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 155.

112. See p. 23.

113. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 140; 83.

114. I refer to Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 392, n. 1.

115. See Meyer, Trilogie, I, p. 118 n.; III, p. 183 etc. and on sand in general Krick, Feuergründung, p. 120 ff.



*Kuśa* is also used in eliminatory rites, when some dangerous substance should be prevented from coming into contact with, e.g., the bare ground. Thus ŚG. 1, 28, 7 enjoins those persons who perform the tonsure of a young boy to place the hair on a "fragment of *kuśa*" (*kuśabhitta*, also KauṣG. 1, 21, 6; BG. 2, 4, 15 and HG. 2, 6, 12 speak of a *darbhastamba*, GG. 2, 9, 26 of a *stamba* "a bunch, tuft or cluster (of grass)" which, it is observed, some prefer instead of a bull's dung<sup>116</sup>). – The same purificatory and neutralizing character of *kuśa* is apparent from the injunctions in ĀśvG. 4, 8, 22 and 27 to make *bali* offerings to Rudra's hosts on wicker-work baskets of *kuśa* (*kuśasūnā*) and to pour out the blood of the sacrificial animal which is due to the serpents on such baskets or on rows (*vīṭā*) of *darbha*<sup>117</sup>.

Water in which *kuśa* has been steeped (*kuśodaka*) or which has been boiled with *kuśa* is a means of purification – and hence sometimes indicated by the term *pavitra* (Yajñ. 1, 230) – used, e.g., in the purificatory ceremony described in AVPar. 38 and BDh. 4, 5, 25 (cf. also ĀgnG. 2, 7, 7: 114, 8; 15) together with cow's urine, cowdung, milk, coagulated milk and butter (38, 1, 4); the mixture is drunk<sup>118</sup>. See also BGŚ. 1, 23, 9; 2, 13, 6; 2, 16, 7; 2, 20, 7; 5, 3, 10. BDh. 4, 5, 10 and 13 prescribe *kuśodaka* to persons undertaking particular penances or mortifications (*kṛcchra*)<sup>119</sup>; ViS. 46, 23; VāsDh. 27, 13 and KG. 6, 4; 7, 3. The man who wishes to become a hermit should fast after having drunk *kuśodaka* (VaikhDh. 2, 1; 122, 4)<sup>120</sup>.

Manu 11, 148 prescribes *kuśavāri* as a means of purification in cases such as touching or receiving spirituous liquor; Kullūka explains "water boiled with *darbha*".

Authorities seem to have differentiated the curious compound *kuśavārijala* which as a means of purification is to be drunk by a partaker of food prepared at a *śrāddha* (ĀgnG. 3, 12, 1: 181, 6) from the above.

On the other hand, the compound *kuśatoya* (in the plural) denotes in VaikhG. 7, 3: 105, 14; 17; 106, 8 water mixed with *kuśa* used to wash a corpse or its bones

116. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 92; as to cowdung used for the same purpose also p. 106.

117. In post-Vedic literature various stories are told with a view to explain, *inter alia*, the sacredness or purificatory power of *kuśa* grass. When Garuḍa, who had carried off the *soma* had put this on *kuśa* (Mbh. 1, 30, 15) from which he had taken it away, the snakes who had hoped to find it there licked the *darbha* grass (*śic*) as it has been the seat of the *soma*. Then their tongues became forked, and the *darbha* stalks became purifying (*pavitriṇah*) as they had been in touch with *soma*. In a variant of this story (Kathās. 22, 195 f.) the *soma* is placed on a bed of *darbha* which in the next line is called *pavitre kuśāstare* and is then licked by the snakes. – According to an addition to the story of Mañkapaka who had cut his hand with a blade of *kuśa* (Mbh. 3, 81, 98 ff.) Mahādeva (Śiva) told him that it was the sacredness in this grass that was capable of turning his blood into vegetable juice. See Sh.M. Gupta, Plant myths and traditions in India, p. 44 (without an indication of the source).

118. Post-Vedic references are, e.g., found in LiPur. 15, 21. It is also used for purificatory purposes (if something has been defiled): 89, 64; 69; Mayamata 18, 133; 200 (and without the five products of the cow 192).

119. For *kuśa* in *kṛcchras* see W. Gampert, Die Sühnezeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur, Prague 1939, p. 48 ff. etc.

120. For a regular temple rite requiring the use of *kuśodaka* mixed with the five products of the cow in modern South India see C.G. Diehl, Instrument and purpose, Lund 1956, p. 108; for a *prāyaścitta* in which it is required see Somaśambhupaddhati, Prāy. 109; for *kuśāmbu* as an ingredient of the *pañcagavya* (five products of the cow) *ibid.* 111. – See also, e.g., LiPur. 1, 25, 26 f.: sprinkling *kuśa* water, wearing a *pavitra* in the hand etc.; 1, 98, 64; 66.

that have been touched by impure beings<sup>121</sup>. – In ViS. 73, 12 water (*udaka*) for washing the feet offered to the deceased ancestors is scented and mixed with *kuśa* and sesame (which is often used in the cult of the dead<sup>122</sup> and on this occasion is also, together with *kuśa*, offered to the brahmins who represent the Fathers)<sup>123</sup>.

In case at a given moment one of the consecrated participants in a soma ceremony falls ill one should (ĀśvŚ. 6, 9, 1), with a mantra which in a similar context is also used at ĀpŚ. 14, 21, 7 and in which the Lord of prosperity (Pūṣan) is invoked to make the patient prosper<sup>124</sup>, perform the *brahmāhuti* – at which the recitation of the Veda takes the place of burnt oblations (Manu 2, 106) – bring near lukewarm<sup>125</sup> water and put therein 21<sup>126</sup> barley-corns – generally regarded as averting evil etc. – and (21, comm.) bunches of *kuśa* and with this water perform a sprinkling rite (cf. ĀśvŚ. 4, 5, 5) and wash the patient with the mantra “ye are the living ...; ye are those who make alive ..., make him alive ...”, which in ĀpŚ. 14, 20, 8 is likewise used in a rite of appeasement of evil<sup>127</sup>.

121. Cf. p. 30 ff. above.

122. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 120 f.

123. It is worth observing that in post-Vedic times images of gods were bathed with a mixture of the decoction of twigs of various auspicious trees (*plakṣa*, *āsvattha*, *uḍumbara* etc.), “all herbs” (*sarva-uṣadhi*, i.e., according to Utpala on Varāhamihira, BS. 60, 8 useful plants with auspicious names such as *jayā*, *jayantī*, *abhayā*), *kuśa* and the like, i.e. other auspicious grass, see, e.g., ibidem, 60, 1 ff. (See Ajay Mitra Shastri, India as seen in the Bṛhatsamhitā of Varāhamihira. Delhi 1969, p. 176 f.; also, e.g., LiPur. 33, 14). For bathing in sacred water mixed with *kuśa* see, e.g., LiPur. 25, 14. Those who are prevented from bathing, for a ritual purpose, in water may also take a bath in cow’s urine or dung, milk, sacred ashes, *darbha* grass, earth and a mantra (Diehl, Instrument and purpose, p. 74). – As to the belief in the efficacy of such decoctions it may be noticed that Cherokee women wash their heads with a decoction of the wiry and tough roots of the catgut plant to make their hair strong and that Cherokee ball-players wash themselves with it to toughen their muscles (J.G. Frazer, The Golden Bough, abr. ed., London 1957, p. 38). – The holy water of the Roman Catholic church contains various consecrated admixtures (for references see F. Heiler, Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion, Stuttgart 1961, p. 40).

124. See J. Gonda, Pūṣan and Sarasvatī, Amsterdam Acad. 1985, p. 121; 133 etc.

125. “Having mixed cold and warm water” (comm.).

126. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 40 f.

127. It may be briefly noticed that in the religious vocabulary of the inhabitants of Bali the word *kuśa* has survived up to the present day. It denotes the grass which in profane usage is called *alang-alang* and under that name is the Indonesian word for the imperata cylindrical, one of the botanical names given to the *darbha* (Meulenbeld, Mādhavanidāna, p. 561). According to Hooykaas (in Staal, op cit., II, p. 384), the purifying force of jungle grass is held in high esteem in Balinese ritual. The Balinese priest prepares the vessel which will contain holy water by knotting *kuśa* around it, an act called by the Sanskrit term *śiroveṣṭa* (*śiroveṣṭa* “turban or a similar head-dress”), “just as he will knot *kuśa* grass round his own head when the Śiva soul descends into his body” (C. Hooykaas, Suryasevana, Amsterdam Academy 1966, p. 145; 168 f.; also p. 54; 84). This grass is also a tool used in writing three times over the surface of the holy water. *Kuśa* stalks are moreover one of the components of the *lis*, the holy water sprinkler; then they function just as leaves of particular trees etc. as a means of warding off evil (J. Hooykaas-van Leeuwen Boomkamp, Ritual purification of a Balinese temple, Amsterdam Acad. 1961, p. 9 f.). Grass stalks are also, together with other objects to which a protective or purificatory function is ascribed, buried in the foundation of household shrines (J.C. van Eerde, in Bijdragen Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde 65 (1911), p. 16 f.).

The value of *kuśa* and other grasses for ritual purposes is also recognized by the Tibetan Buddhists (see, e.g., T. Skorupski, in Staal, op. cit., p. 409). Among the objects wrapped up and put into statues or reliquaries are not only “spells” printed or written on paper, relics, precious stones but also grasses, grains, fruit, leaves. These objects are consecrated in a special service – which is an event of major importance – together with a high stick of juniper wood called the life-wood

When in the non-Vedic rite described in BGŚ. 2, 13 Viṣṇu is invited to come near one wishes to receive him respectfully (§ 22) with *argha* water with milk, tops of *kuśa* grass, husked and unhusked barley corns, sesame and white mustard-seeds (which are used for protective or eliminatory purposes and bring happiness). Similarly, at 2, 16, 26 (in connexion with the consecration of an image of Rudra).

*Kuśa* grass may serve as a substitute for wool. When those who are performing the *varuṇapraghāsa* (the second of the seasonal sacrifices) make a ram and a ewe of husked half-fried barley and are unable to procure wool to make these images covered with hair (lest they should be ritually impure and unfit to be sacrificed, TB. 1, 6, 4, 4), they may also employ (tufts of) *kuśa* (KŚ. 5, 3, 8; ŚBM. 2, 5, 2, 15; ŚBK. 1, 5, 1, 13; BhŚ. 8, 7, 7; ĀpŚ. 8, 6, 11 f.; VaikhŚ. 8, 11: 86, 15. In this connexion the texts use the term *kuśorṇā* “*kuśa*-wool”, i.e. *kuśa* which is, functions, as wool”. This compound occurs also in VādhS. 3, 69: 173, 3 in connexion with the *uṣṇīṣa* of the sacrificial horse. Now, whereas TB. 3, 8, 2, 4 knows of one rope or rein (*raśanā*) consisting of *darbha*, by which the horse is purified and thus made fit for the sacrifice, BŚ. 15, 2: 205, 9; 15, 4: 208, 12; 17 makes mention of two of them, one made of *muñja* grass, the other of *kuśa*, which the officiant puts, one by one, round the neck of the horse; in contrast to this work ĀpŚ. 20, 2, 7 speaks of a rope made of either *darbha* or *muñja*. Contrary to these authorities VādhS., l.c., mentions an *uṣṇīṣa*, i.e. “anything wound round the head” made of *kuśorṇā* which “is wound round (*anuveṣṭitaḥ*) the halter of the horse, which consists of *muñja*; the former is the “receptacle” (wrapping, *bhājanam*) of the halter (*abhidhānī*), the other is to ensure firmness”<sup>128</sup>.

KŚ. 25, 4, 1 ff. enumerates a number of substitutes for the ritual fire if this cannot be produced in the regular way. One of these is a bunch of *kuśa* (§ 6), that is to say, one may offer one’s oblations *kuśastambe* (after having laid such bunches on the three fire-places, comm.). Thereafter, however, one should give up sitting on a seat made of *kuśa* (§ 7), apparently because one has availed oneself of that grass for a loftier aim. Similarly, ĀpŚ. 9, 3, 3 ff.; ĀśvŚ. 3, 14, 14 ff.; ŚB 4, 1, 12. An explanation is given in TB. 3, 7, 3, 1 ff.: the bunch of *darbha* (*sic*, like Āp. and Āśv.) is a suitable substitute, because *darbha* contains fire (just as there is fire in every piece of wood (ŚB. 12, 4, 3, 1; cf. also TB. 2, 2, 1, 5)). “If (thereafter) he (the sacrificer) should sit on *darbha*, he would sit on the very oblation which he would offer in the fire”<sup>129</sup>.

or life-tree (*śrog śīṅ*). They are believed to represent the body of the pure thought of a Buddha or saint and are therefore of higher worth than corporeal relics. Among them are a long root of quick- or quitch-grass (*ṛtsva ram pa*) which is regarded as identical with *dūrūā* and a small bundle of *kuśa* brought from India. These two grasses are supposed to represent, together with the *śrog śīṅ*, to the right and left of which they are attached, the three channels in the body. During the consecration the Wisdom Being is invoked and fastened. From the rite and from the statue as a whole a beneficial influence is expected on the life of the donor and of those present or visiting the statue in its shrine. (For particulars see Losang Paldhen Gyalzur and A.H.N. Verwey, *Spells on the life-wood*, in *Selected Studies on ritual in the Indian religions*, Essays to D.J. Hoens, Supplement to *Numen* 45, Leiden 1983, p. 169 ff.).

128. On this passage see W. Caland, in *Acta Or. (Lugd.)* 4, p. 175, whose translation of *kuśorṇā* “*Kuśa-gras und Wolle*” is disputable.

129. See also W.B. Bollée’s note in *Ṣaḍviṃśā-Brāhmaṇa*. Thesis Utrecht 1956, p. 94 f.

ŚB. 4, 5, 10, 1 ff. deals with those plants which may serve as substitutes for the *soma*, if this cannot be found. After the brown-flowering *phālguna* and others the yellow *kuśa* plants are the author's fifth (and last) choice (§ 6).

When the teacher performs the *medhājanana* ceremony<sup>130</sup> for a student the latter has to sprinkle water round a *palāśa* tree with one root, or round a bunch of *kuśa*, if there is no *palāśa*, whilst pronouncing the prayer "as thou art the preserver of the treasure of sacrifice for the gods, thus may I become the preserver of the treasure of the Veda for men" (ĀśvG. 1, 22, 21). Now, the *palāśa* (*butea frondosa*) is 'identified' with *brahman* (ŚB. 5, 2, 4, 18; 5, 3, 5, 11; 6, 6, 3, 7; 12, 7, 2, 15) and the *soma* (ŚB. 6, 5, 1, 1; 6, 6, 3, 7). The fact that *kuśa* may take its place attests to its importance.

Describing the *brahmamedha*, a particular funeral ritual mentioned in texts of the Black Yajurveda<sup>131</sup>, ĀgnG. 3, 7, 3: 157, 2 states that when the moment has come at which the *anustaraṇī* cow is normally sacrificed no cow is immolated but the relative rite is to be performed<sup>132</sup> by means of fresh *kuśa* shoots, dry cowdung<sup>133</sup> and ghee<sup>134</sup>.

Occasionally, however, another species of grass may be employed instead of *kuśa*, if that is not available. In BŚ. 28, 13: 366, 6 prescribing the use of *kuśāḥ* for spreading or strewing, the following plants are, probably in order of preference, allowed as substitutes: seeds, *kutaḥa* grass, *aśvavāla* (*saccharum spontaneum*), *muñja*, fragrant *tejana* reed, *arjunādāra* (?), *dhūrvā* (*panic* or bent grass), *śyāmākāḥ* (*cultivated millet*), trees with a milky juice, sugar-cane. ViDh. 79, 2 allows the use of *kāśa* (which is often employed for mats, roofs etc.) or *dhūrvā*, if a man who is to perform a *śrāddha* ceremony cannot procure *kuśa*. Similarly, e.g., in the much later VāyuPur. 75, 41. If a householder is unable to obtain *kuśa* for his domestic sacrifices, he may employ any species of grass with the exception of *sūka* grass (the awn or beard of grain<sup>135</sup>), *sāra* (*saccharum sara*, a sort of reed used for arrows), *śīrya* (which, meaning literally "destructible"<sup>136</sup> was identified with *uśīra*, the (fragrant) root of the *andropogon muricatus* etc.<sup>137</sup>), *balbaja* (*eleusine indica*, a species of coarse rush-like grass not liked by cattle), *mulava*, *nala* (a species of reed), and *śuñṭha* (JG. 1, 1: 1, 11). The same enumeration of disapproved grasses occurs in GG. 1, 5, 18, a similar one in VaikhŚ. 11, 10: 130, 8. Since some likewise objectionable trees mentioned in GG. 1, 5, 18 were used in rites for malevolent purposes (*abhicāra*), these grasses were no doubt

130. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 371 f.; 378; 383.

131. I refer to W. Caland, Die altindischen Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche, Amsterdam 1896, p. 96 f.; for the cow p. 20; 40 f. See also HPitṛS. 11; VaikhG. 7, 1.

132. The text has the rare verb *anust-* (BPitṛS. 2, 1, 7) "to spread, i.e. slay, after".

133. The comm. on GG. 4, 8, 18 observes that green (not dry) cowdung is that which is found on a place where green (fresh) *trṇa* (plural), considered auspicious, comes up.

134. It may be recalled that in later times śivaite *liṅgas* may be made of various materials, among them sand, ashes and *kuśa* (LiPur. 74, 6 ff.).

135. See also Meulenbeld, Mādhavanidāna, p. 164.

136. Hence H. Oldenberg's translation "grass that is apt to break" (The Gṛhya-sūtras, II, p. 27: GG. 1, 5, 18, in Sacred Books of the East, 30, Oxford 1892).

137. W. Caland, The Jaiminigr̥hyasūtra, Lahore 1922, Engl. translation, p. 2; Meulenbeld, op. cit., p. 529 f.

not only regarded as unfit because of their 'secular' properties, but also as intrinsically inadequate or even harmful.

It is not surprising that *kuśa* should also occur in a classificatory enumeration. According to JG. 2, 9: 35, 4 and ĀgnG. 2, 5, 1: 77, 5 the fire-wood used in worshipping the nine planets should be a piece of *arka*-wood for the Sun, of *palāśa*-wood for the moon (this tree "is" Soma, ŚB. 6, 5, 1, 1; 6, 6, 3, 7) and so on, *dūrvā* grass for Rāhu and, finally, *kuśa* for Ketu. Here *kuśa* obviously is the last and the least, considered less suitable than the hard *dūrvā*.

Passing mention may be made of a use of blades of *kuśa* that is attested to in Pāli texts, viz. as marks or lots, e.g. Vinaya 1, 299 *pātite kuse* "when the lot has been cast"; 3, 58.



## IV

### Darbha

*Darbha* which, as has already been observed<sup>1</sup>, has often been equated with, but also been distinguished from, *kuśa*<sup>2</sup>, is botanically known as *imperata arundinacea* Cyrill. or *cylindrica* Beauv.<sup>3</sup> It is straight and pointed, rough to handle and about two feet in height. It has subtle, sharp tips<sup>4</sup>; its inflorescence is a dense, fluffy, silver-white panicle. If the etymological identity of the name with whruss. *dórob* "basket, box, case" and the derivation from *ḍṛbh-* in skt. *ḍṛbhāti* "to string together, to tie in a bunch" and iran. *darb-* "to sew"<sup>5</sup>, avestan *daraxōda* "bundle of muscles"<sup>6</sup> are right, the plant seems to owe this name to a striking characteristic of the outward appearance of its bunches. (Compare English words such as *knotgrass*, a popular name of common weeds with jointed stems). Then the question might arise, if this word has replaced a more original, indigenous name.

The ancient Indians were very well aware of the great practical and ritual importance of this grass. In the Atharvaveda references to it are comparatively numerous. That *darbha* should be cut with special care and cautiousness appears, for instance, from AVŚ. 12, 3, 31 (cf. AVP. 17, 39, 1): one should cut the plants at the joints without harming them; "they of whom Soma compasses (rules) the kingdom, let the plants be without wrath toward us". This stanza is in Kauś. 8, 11 prescribed when the cutter of the grass receives the sickle (*paśu*; *darbhalavanam* in Kauś.). See also Kauś. 61, 38 f. where *pādas* a and b are muttered when the knife is given to the one who has to fetch the *darbha* (*darbhāhāra*) and to cut it on or above the joints<sup>7</sup>; 1, 24 f. adding that the cutter should take (fetch) the *darbha* (which he has cut) silently (i.e. without a mantra) and put it to the left (north) of the fire<sup>8</sup>.

In AVŚ. 11, 6 (AVP. 15, 13 f.) a considerable number of deities, powers, powerful entities etc. are invoked to free those speaking from distress. In st. Ś. 15 (and

1. See p. 29.

2. We also find explanations such as *darbhah* (i.e.) *kuśamayah prasiddhah* "darbha, i.e. the well-known (grass, plant) consisting of *kuśa*".

3. For other names see Meulenbeld, *Mādhavanidāna*, p. 561 f.

4. For *darbha* piercing one's foot see, e.g., *Kathāsaritsāgara*, 56, 309.

5. Mayrhofer, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, 11, p. 23; 60.

6. For other related words see H.W. Bailey, in *Trans. Philol. Soc.* (London) 1955, p. 79, who assumes the existence of *darbha* "string, rope".

7. For this passage see Gonda, *Śavayajñas*, p. 170 f.

8. See also the comm. on Kauś. 137, 4 (in M. Bloomfield's edition, in *J. Am. Or. Soc.* 14, New Haven 1889 (reprint Delhi 1972), p. 290, n. 5).

P. 15, 13, 7) mention is made of the five kingdoms of plants and of *darbha*, hemp, barley, and *saha* (“a kind of herb”, comm.)<sup>9</sup> addressed for the same purpose. The comm. explains: “the five kingdoms of the character of leaves, joints, flowers, fruits, and roots (are) charged by the king (Soma), (who is) a physician”. This may be right in that these five components of plants could be used for medicinal purposes<sup>10</sup>.

In AVŚ. 8, 7, 20 (AVP. 16, 13, 9) the *aśvattha* (figus religiosa, most suitable for ritual purposes<sup>11</sup>), *darbha* and *soma*, the king of the plants, are, together with rice and barley, stated to provide a remedy. This *sūkta* is in Kauś. 26, 33; 40 used in a remedial rite requiring an amulet (cf. also AVŚ. 8, 7, 14; AVP. 16, 13, 4) made of splinters of ten (kinds of) trees (see Keśava’s comm.) which cures any disease. The words for “herbs” (*oṣadhi*) and “plants” (*virudh*) occur throughout the *sūkta*.

In Kauś. 8, 16 *darbha* and tips of *durvā* belong to the plants which are or may be used for practices and preparations that are *śāntāḥ*, that is free from evil, auspicious, producing good effects. In VaitS. 5, 10 these plants are indispensable ingredients of holy water<sup>12</sup>.

Owing to its natural properties and supposed magical virtue *darbha* obviously made excellent talismans and amulets. A typically atharvanic, excessively overdone glorification of a *darbha* amulet is found in AVŚ. 19, 32 (AVP. 12, 4). The *darbha* – notice that it is “of uncut leaves” (*acchinnaṇa*)<sup>13</sup> – is not only described as hundred-jointed, thousand-leaved and *ugra* (st. 1) – an adjective which is often difficult to translate<sup>14</sup> but can in any case express the idea of “possessed of intrinsic force and power, in a supernormal way powerful and influential” and very often denotes a quality or characteristic of a great god, especially of Indra – ; its tuft is said to be in the sky (st. 3), it has even penetrated the three heavens and three earths (st. 4); being god-born it is constantly a supporting pillar in the sky (*divi-ṣṭambha*, st. 7); propping atmosphere and sky it has made firm the earth (st. 9). Having come into being as the first of plants (st. 10) it is requested to increase the lifetime of the one who binds it on (in case of fear of Yama, Nakṣatrakalpa 19); it makes him overwhelmingly or victoriously powerful (*sahasvān*, st. 5), a winner of men (st. 7), is his supporter and blessing (st. 9), expected to protect him and to slay his rivals (st. 10; cf. 4).

Likewise used in a “great ceremony for appeasement of evil” (*mahāśānti*, Nakṣatrakalpa, 1. cit.) is AVŚ. 19, 33 (AVP. 12, 5), which with similar extravagant praise describes the *darbha* amulet as fire of the waters<sup>15</sup>, of thousandfold worth, the *rājasūya* (royal consecration) of plants (st. 1) – that is, according to the commentary, either “auspicious like the *rājasūya*” or “most praised and auspicious among the plants as the *rājasūya* is among the sacrificial rites” or “like the *rājasūya* the concern of an

9. See also H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, Berlin 1879, p. 72; on *darbha* p. 70.

10. Nevertheless, the spontaneous occurrence of a tuft of *darbha* at one’s sleeping-place is a portentum which requires a *mahāśānti* (AVPar. 72, 3, 11).

11. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 110 f. etc.

12. See W. Caland, *Das Vaitānasūtra des Atharvaveda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1910, p. 14.

13. See p. 55; 57; 65.

14. See J. Gonda, *Ancient-Indian ojas ...*, Utrecht 1952, p. 6 ff., 13 ff. etc.

15. Remember that there is fire in the *darbha* (see p. 13; 73).

universal king" – , as a keen king, powerful and demon-slaying, the *ojas* (see below) of the gods and *ugra* strength (st. 4), as "snatched out of ghee, rich in honey and milk, establishing the earth, unstirred but stirring (other things), possessed of the energy of the great ones, defeating the rivals" (st. 2) and as going across the earth with vigorous, creative and authoritative activity (*ojasā*, often used in connexion with Indra, st. 3), but also as sitting lovely on the *vedi*<sup>16</sup> (for receiving sacrificial material etc., cf. the comm.) at the sacrificial ceremony<sup>17</sup> – a clear reference to one of its ritual functions – and as a purifier (*pavitram*<sup>18</sup>), borne by the *ṛṣis* and requested to purify those speaking from difficulties (st. 3). With this *darbha* amulet the wearer will excell (all) other men (st. 5). Although these glorifications of the *darbha* charms were no doubt to a considerable extent meant to increase their efficacy, they may be taken to attest to the belief in the inherence of some uncommon and mysterious powers in this grass. In the light of the part which charms and amulets play and have played in the life of other peoples<sup>19</sup> the conclusion seems legitimate that many Vedic Indians were greatly devoted to these objects and attached much value and significance to the protective qualities of *darbha*:

AVP. 19, 2 calls upon many gods for help and protection and expresses, among other things, the wish that the evil designs of the wicked will turn against them. In st. 14 the *darbha* (obviously used as an amulet), spoiling (i.e. counteracting) the illness, is enjoined to go back to the originator.

AVŚ. 6, 43 (AVP. 19, 33, 7–9) is in Kauś. 36, 32 stated to accompany the employment of the magic power of *darbha* to appease anger; the grass is dug up in the manner prescribed at Kauś. 33, 9 ff. (cf. Keśava's note<sup>20</sup>), wrapped in *darbha* (Kauś. 33, 12) and placed on the head of the angry person. The *darbha* is described as removing and appeasing anger (st. 1), to have many roots, to reach down to the sea and to have arisen out of the earth (st. 2); it is a means of getting rid of uncontrolled speech and so on (st. 3).

According to Keśava's explanation of Kauś. 25, 37 in which 21<sup>21</sup> bunches of *darbha* – a *darbhapiñjūli* consists of three stalks that are tied together in the same place<sup>22</sup> – and the same number of reeds or grasses used as thatch (*valīkaiḥ: grhatṛ-ṇāni*) are thrown into a large water-jar over which AVŚ. 1, 10 is muttered; with this water the head of a person who suffers from dropsy is sprinkled.

The poet of AVP. 7, 7, 1 ab – the second line of which is identical with AVŚ. 2, 4, 2, the first line with AVP. 15, 22, 10 ab and the first *pāda* almost identical with AVŚ. 19, 32, 1 c, while *śatakāṇḍaḥ* in *pāda* b occurs in 19, 32, 1 a – informs

16. Not "the sacrificial hearth" (W.D. Whitney and Ch.R. Lanman, *Atharva-Veda Saṃhitā*, Cambridge Mass. 1905, p. 950).

17. For *adhvara* see J. Gonda, *Adhvarā* and *adhvaryu*, *Vishv. Indol. Journal* 3 (1965), p. 163 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 86 ff.).

18. See p. 30 f.; 42 above.

19. See, e.g., E.W. Smith and A.M. Dale, *The Ila-speaking peoples of Northern Rhodesia*, London 1920, I, p. 252.

20. See also Caland, *Altindisches Zauberritual*, p. 124.

21. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 40 f.

22. But other commentaries, e.g. Dhūrtasvāmin on ĀpŚ. 1, 2, 3 explain *puñjūla* etc. as "tuft, clump, bunch" (*stamba*).

us that *darbha*, the *ugra*<sup>23</sup> (one) of the plants, was born with a hundred joints. In 1 cd it is asked to protect, as a jewel (*mañi*, a gem as a rule supposed to possess some magic or occult power<sup>24</sup>) those speaking with virtue (energy) a thousandfold. In st. 2 the same grass is, curiously, the subject of a simile: "Just as *darbha* when it is born pierces the skin of the earth, let so be pierced the people of him who has designs on us". After stating that demons, pain, all evil spirits are chased away (similarly, st. 7 f. where it is described as "possessing a sharp shoot" and burns out evil dreams), the *darbha* which kills with a golden hand<sup>25</sup> is again besought for protection (5) and declared to have been born, together with the brown *soma*, as an autocratic ruler on the mountain; very honourably indeed.

In AVP. 15, 22, 10 (see above) the *darbha ugraḥ* ... is hurled by the gods, has come for (the sake of) well-being and is, as a male (bull), in agreement with (the) lumps of clay. Clods of clay or earth are used in ceremonial purifications, because they are believed to dispel evil<sup>26</sup>.

The amuletic charm made of *darbha* which is the subject of AVŚ. 19, 28 (AVP. 13, 11, 1–9) is in st. 1–3 said or requested to burn the speaker's haters and in 4–10 to split, sever, cut, pierce them and so on. It is, moreover, to burn like heat (st. 2 and 3). About the outward form and the manufacture of this charm we grope in the dark, but accidents of local supply and the particular requirements of their users often determine what objects shall serve as charms. In this case the special emphasis laid upon the possibility of a burning amulet of *darbha* had no doubt sprung from the belief that there is fire in this grass<sup>27</sup>. Being pointed it was of course also considered a most useful means of splitting, cutting or piercing. In AVŚ. 19, 29 (AVP. 13, 11, 10–18) which is a continuation of the preceding *sūkta* the *darbha* amulet is not only exaggeratedly urged to crush and slay the rivals but also to scorch and burn them. In AVŚ. 19, 30 (AVP. 13, 11, 19–23) the defensive character of the amulet is more emphasized, although in st. 4 it is said to be a burner.

Notwithstanding the many questionable points in the long *sūkta* addressed to snakes in order to counteract the effects of their poison AVŚ. 10, 4 (AVP. 16, 15–17), so much is clear that these animals, which are to be slain also if they house in *darbha* (Ś. st. 13; P. 16, 3), are fought almost in any way. In the syntactically and semantically unclear stanza 2<sup>28</sup> *darbhaḥ* seems to be the subject; if *tarūṇakam* (*sic*) is an apposition and *śociḥ* the predicate, these three words may mean "*darbha*, viz. a young shoot, is a flame". Are the following words "the hair of the tail of the horse being the tale-tuft of a knotty and sharp one (an allusion to a reed? cf. AVŚ. 8,

23. See p. 53 above.

24. For crystals and other such stones used as charms see H. Webster, *Magic*, Stanford Cal. and London 1948, p. 123 ff.

25. Cf. *Manu* 8, 386. The alternative "which kills the one with a golden hand (i.e. Savitar)" is improbable.

26. See, e.g., Meyer, *Trilogie*, III, p. 295, s.v. *Erde*; Caland, *Altind. Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*, p. 161.

27. See p. 53 above.

28. On this stanza see V. Henry, *La magie dans l'Inde antique*, Paris 1904, p. 200 f.; M. Bloomfield, *Hymns of the Atharva-Veda*, Oxford 1897 (Delhi 1964; 1967), p. 606 f.; Whitney and Lanman, *op. cit.*, p. 575.

8, 4)” added to “identify” the *darbha* with the tail-tuft of the snake-destroying horse Paidva mentioned in st. 5 ff. and represented by the insect of that name which is used in the rite described in Kauś. 32, 20 ff.? Anyhow, the *darbha* may be regarded as identical with the torch or firebrand with which the bitten spot of the patient is cauterized and which is then thrown upon the serpent (AVŚ. st. 26 “Agni has put out the snake’s poison ..., which has gone after the biter”<sup>29</sup>; Kauś. § 24 and Keśava).

Kauś. 46, 19 ff. enjoins (a teacher) to bind a cord of *darbha* (*darbhaśulba*) round the neck of a student who has violated his vow of chastity. From AVŚ. 6, 63, 1–3, which are to be recited when the special sacrifice that is to follow immediately is being performed, it appears that this cord is regarded as being Nirṛti’s (Perdition’s): in st. 1 this deity is said to have bound it round the neck. In order to release the student from perdition one should sprinkle him with water consecrated with the above stanzas in which Nirṛti is also besought to unfasten the fetters (cf. st. 2). Lastly, one sprinkles the student with holy water (*śāntiyudaka*) and unfastens the cord. Notice that here also the material used is *darbha*.

If one wishes to injure a person belonging to one of the despised social classes (e.g., a potter), one should in a low voice pronounce a spell over a stalk of *darbha* (*darbheṣīkā*) in his house (AVPar. 36, 14, 1; see also 36, 6, 2). As is well known, in many cases the spell alone suffices to produce the effect desired, but the substance over which it is muttered is as a rule supposed to intensify its power. On the other hand, an object which has power in its own right needs to be accompanied by a formula. Without a spell the essentially auspicious *darbha* would be useless for the purposes of the magic art.

Kauś. 16, 25 teaches a nobleman to make a device for putting his enemies to flight: he should hang up a white-footed object (probably an arrow) with a cord of *darbha* (*darbharajjvā*).

In AVP. 1, 87, 1 the *darbha*, being the lord of the (useful) plants, is described as “cleaving her asunder like a girl” and requested to split the head of the worm, (his?) wife, to cast down (her) body, to cleave it and to break (her) bones in pieces. Whatever the ritual practice for which these words were destined may have been, it is clear that the sharp *darbha* is here regarded as an efficacious magic weapon<sup>30</sup>.

In the ceremony against witchcraft Kauś. 39, 13 ff. a magic puppet (*kr̥tyā*) is anointed etc. and wrapped round with a cord of *darbha* and then requested to go away (in order to injure the enemy etc.). This wrapping no doubt is to transfer to the puppet a particular power or quality which makes it adapted for the operator’s purpose.

MG. 1, 11, 6 makes mention of the girding of the bride with a yoke-rope on the inside of (i.e. under) her (upper-)garment, VāG. 14, 2, in the same connexion of a *darbhaśulba*; cf. also Kauś. 76, 7 (*pāśena yoktreṇa*). From the accompanying mantra (MG., VāG., cf. AVŚ. 14, 2, 70) it appears that she is girded with the milk (*payas*,

29. The meaning of the rare verb *nirdhā-* (also RV. 10, 160, 4) is somewhat uncertain.

30. In the post-Vedic literature we also find cases of *darbha* or *kusā* thrown by a powerful being and becoming a fiery trident etc. (see, e.g., LiPur. 1, 36, 53 f.).



or fluid) of the earth, with water and herbs, with offspring and wealth; the wish “may you acquire prosperity” concludes this mantra<sup>31</sup>. The rope is loosened at a later moment (MG. 1, 11, 20; VāG. 14, 24) after the rite of the seven steps, which is of decisive significance; it would seem that during this rite and the preceding *lāja-homa* the bride should be especially fortified with this additional auspicious object. When the rope has been loosened it is tied under her (upper-)garment. It is not identical with the rope of *darbha* by means of which the ends of the garments (of bride and bridegroom?) are tied together (MG. 1, 11, 5, which is not entirely clear)<sup>32</sup>. If so, the ‘symbolism’ of the action and of the “male knot” needs no comment.

A cord of *darbha* is wound round the sacrificial post (ĀpŚ. 7, 11, 2; cf. BhŚ. 7, 8, 17 ff.), no doubt also to impart strength to it, to save it from perdition and to make it more suitable to its particular purpose (cf. also ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 19 f.; 11, 7, 3, 1 ff.)<sup>33</sup>.

If, AVPar. 31, 9, 1 argues, one wishes to perform the ceremony of 1000000 oblations (which is a means of becoming prosperous) for malevolent purposes, one has to modify it, and among other things replace the *darbha* by the sort of red called *śara*<sup>34</sup>, the ghee by (sesame) oil (*taila*, often used in the cult of the dead and in magic), and also the blessing *svāhā* by the interjection *pha!* which is characteristic of malevolent mantras. The difference in function between *darbha* and *śara* is clear. The use of *śara*, of which tops and roots have been clipped, is explicitly prescribed in rites for destructive or malevolent purposes: Kauś. 47, 1, in contrast to 1, 22 f. where the *barhis* for the Fathers is stated to be clipped at the root, that for the gods at the joints; 14, 7 where AVŚ. 1, 2, 1 “we know the reed’s father ...” is used in a battle rite performed for putting an enemy to flight; 47, 52 where a burning reed is to concentrate its heat upon the antagonist. Notice that the Indians derive *śara* from *śṛṇāti* “to crush, break, smash” (see, e.g., ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 1), an etymology that has no doubt contributed to its suitability for malevolent purposes (cf., e.g., also ĀpŚ. 3, 14, 3, where it means “arrow”).

There is some difficulty in ascertaining the function of the *darbha* which in the magic procedure Kauś. 21, 21 ff., announced as rites for (the obtainment of) saps or essences (*rasakarmāṇi*) on behalf of a person desirous of prosperity (Keśava) is placed on<sup>35</sup> the summit of an anthill on which that person should, on the day of new-moon after sunset, three times offer sacrificial butter – with AVŚ. 5, 2, 7, in which the summit is besought to praise a most active helper, viz. (Trita) Āptya<sup>36</sup>

31. For the girding of the student etc. see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 152 f.

32. See the notes in M.J. Dresden, Mānavagṛhyasūtra, Thesis Utrecht 1941, p. 53; 59.

33. Cf. also BŚ. 4, 4: 114, 15; the *yūpa* is girded with a triple (three-stranded) cord which is three *vyāyāmas* long and is wound three times; the explanations of the number 3 in ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 20 are based on ritualistic philosophy: “the threefold means food, and food is cattle”, and “father, mother and the child are three”.

34. According to Sāyaṇa (on RV. 1, 191, 3) *veṇudaṇḍasadyā antaśchidrās tyṇaviśeṣāḥ*.

35. Caland, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 57 translated “unter”.

36. See Whitney and Lanman, op cit., p. 224 and A.A. Macdonell, Vedic mythology, Strassburg 1897, p. 67 ff.

(and so to induce him to lend assistance) – in a fire which in a cup is held just above the anthill. Then he should pour rice and the residue (*sampāta*)<sup>37</sup> of the butter on the anthill, add some “saps” (sour milk etc., see Kauś. 8, 19) and consume this mixture with the fairly appropriate AVŚ. 5, 2, 3 which refers to mingling *kratu* (“the faculty of realizing intentions by practical ingenuity”) and beseeches the addressed food “to unite with what is sweet”. The point of time is most suited for magical rites, anthills are chthonic and ants are among those animals which are often supposed to be under the control of magic operators<sup>38</sup> and in this case are obviously expected to act – by their characteristic habit, activities and preference for liquid food – as “mediators” between the person offering and interested in the success of the rite on the one hand and the powers responsible for his prosperity on the other: ants were believed to transform the invigorating food and the sap of the earth into their hills (BhŚ. 5, 1, 5; ĀpŚ. 5, 1, 7, mantra); the sacrificer who utilizes these as sacrificial requisites, secures this food and this sap (TB. 1, 1, 3, 4)<sup>39</sup>. Is the *darbha* a sort of screen between the sacred fire and the subterranean powers?

*Darbha* is also used as a prognostic (Kauś. 37, 1 with Keśava's comm.): if one takes, at haphazard, some (consecrated, Keśava) *darbha* in the hand, the blades give a good sign, if their number is even, a method not unknown in the modern West<sup>40</sup>.

The only ṛgvedic<sup>41</sup> reference to *darbha* occurs in the last atharvanic *sūkta* of *maṇḍala* I, viz. 191, which is to render venomous insects inoffensive. Stanza 3 contains some names of grasses among them *kuśara*, *darbha* and *muñja*. Since the stanza contains also the word *adr̥ṣṭāḥ* Sāyaṇa – who explains *darbhāḥ* by *kuśāḥ* – was of the opinion that it refers to “invisible ones” found on these grasses<sup>42</sup>. Veṅkaṭamādhava identified the “invisible ones” as snakes and described the grasses as “pungent-leaved” (*fiḥṣṇapattrāḥ*). The stanza occurs in a partly corrupt, partly different form also as AVP. 9, 6, 7 reading *sarve sākam ni jasyata* “pine away, disappear, all of you, simultaneously” (found in RV. 1, 193, 7 s. s. *nī jasyata* but there the insects are addressed) instead of *sarve sākam nī alipsata* of RV. st. 3. As to the curative power ascribed to the above grasses, medicinal properties were once also in other countries thought to be proper to the joints of several bamboos and so on<sup>43</sup>.

That the Vedic ritualists added to their natural acuteness not only knowledge of the properties of many plants but also an acquaintance with the habits of animals appears, for instance, from those passages where they give the advice to rely on the practical experience of life. If an *agnihotra* cow were to low when she is milked one should by way of rite and expiation (*karma* and *prāyaścitti*) pluck a bunch of grass (*stamba*) and give it to her (ŚB. 12, 4, 1, 12). ĀpŚ. 9, 5, 4 does not mention her

37. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 191 f.

38. See Meyer, Trilogie, III, p. 56; 77; 219.

39. Compare also H. Krick, Das Ritual der Feuergründung, Vienna Acad. 1982, p. 142 f.

40. It goes without saying that the authorities also provide for possible accidents. In case the drawing ladle (*darvī*), a *kūrca*, *prastara*, the *paridhis*, the *barhis*, the *pavitras*, a log (fuel) are damaged by fire, one should perform a particular *prāyaścitta* rite with appropriate mantras (BG. 4, 2, 1 ff.).

41. On the relations of the Ṛgveda with the main traditions of ritualism see J. Gonda, Vedic literature, Wiesbaden 1975, p. 88.

42. See also K.F. Geldner, Der Rig-Veda übersetzt, Cambridge Mass. 1951, p. 272.

43. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1970, X, p. 697.

lowing and causes her to eat a *darbhastamba*. An expiation is required because her lowing shows that she foresees hunger for the sacrificer and food is appeasement (*sānti*) (AiB. 5, 27, 6). Thus owing to a “religious” interpretation of the animal’s behaviour an everyday occurrence becomes ritual practice.

For one who is desirous of rain one should remove the utensils used at the *pravargya* at a place where *darbha* grass (plur.) is covered with (and is eaten by) *upādika* ants (BhŚ. 11, 16, 7; ĀpŚ. 15, 16, 5; HŚ. 24, 6, 15). As appears from TB. 1, 1, 3, 4 these ants throw up the strengthening food (*ūrj*) and sap (essence, *rasa*) of the earth; according to TĀ. 5, 10, 6 mentioning the same ritual rule, this grass covered with ants is *anūjjāvarī* (a word of uncertain form and meaning: “where water is produced after (the ants)”<sup>44</sup>, adding: “the rain-water goes over the desiccated land, (where these ants know how to find it (see ŚB. 14, 1, 1, 8)); in TĀ. 5, 15, 1 the *darbhāḥ* are *apām anūjjāvaryaḥ*).

Plants, and especially rapidly growing and widely distributed green plants of great importance to man and his cattle, are almost universally recognized manifestations of nature’s vitality and productiveness<sup>45</sup>. Trees that yield everything man desires and full grassy plains are a well-known topic of many Indian literary works. Among the grasses *darbha* has almost always ranked first in sacredness. From many places discussed in the following paragraphs it will appear that in ritual practice *darbha* is not infrequently closely connected with, and used for the same purpose as, the wood of highly valued and sacred trees.

The *darbha* grasses are considered to be or represent the *amṛta* “the drink of ‘immortality’ i.e. of continued life” and the *vīrya* “manly energy” of the earth (TS. 5, 6, 4, 2) and the sap or essence (*rasa*) of the (useful) plants (*oṣadhi*: see TĀ. 2, 11, 1). The words of the mantra with which the bridegroom girds the bride with a cord made of *darbha* (VG. 14, 2; cf. MG. 1, 11, 6) are illustrative: “I gird you with the fluid (juice, also milk, semen, with the implication of vital power) of the earth, with water and plants (*oṣadhi*), with offspring and “wealth” (property, *dhana*); being girded, acquire prosperity”: the *darbha* represents the fluid of the earth etc., which determine the fecundity of the bride and the prosperity of the couple. The man for whom one offers on a green bunch of *darbha* the roots of which are intact with TS. 5, 6, 4, 1 (implying that the year produces cattle for him) becomes an eater of food (ibidem, 2; ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 3)<sup>46</sup>. In TĀ. 6, 9, 1 a *preta* (“departed”, i.e. deceased person for whom the obsequial rites have not yet been performed) is invited to take a bunch of *darbhas* (*sic*), which is “the *oṣadhi* dear to the Fathers”. – In TS. 6, 1, 1, 7 and ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 4 f. it is told that after Indra had slain Vṛtra whose corpse had contaminated the waters, those waters that remained pure, divine, and fit for sacrifice became *darbha*. In connexion with the swing which is a requisite of the *mahāvratā* ritual AiĀ. 1, 2, 3 states that the ropes should be made

44. “ist wasserhaft”?; zu *anūjjāhīte*, TB. 1, 7, 7, 2 (Caland, Śr. Āp. II, p. 456).

45. Just as the other requisites the grasses belong to, or are presided over by, a deity, *darbha*, like the offering spoon (*juhū*) and the sacrificial butter to Pṛthivi (the Earth), the *kūrca* to Prajāpati (BGŚ. 1, 8, 3).

46. Authors are also well aware of the fact that it is the sun which infuses strength into the plants (*oṣadhi*, e.g. LiPur. 1, 59, 41).

of *darbha*, because of all plants *darbha* is (the only one that is) free from evil (*apahata-pāpman*, lit. “from which the evil is warded off”). These ropes serve to win both kinds of animals. *Darbha*, the hide of an antelope, mantras and brahmins do not lose their purificatory power when they are employed more than once (GSP. 2, 85).

The intimate connexion between *darbha* and water – “*darbha* (plural) is water and (useful) plants” MS. 1, 7, 2: 110, 14; ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2 – is already emphasized in AVŚ. 19, 30, 5 (AVP. 13, 11, 23), which admits of two translations: “From that to which the ocean and Parjanya with the lightning roared was born the golden drop (or globule, *bindu*); from that (drop was born) the *darbha*” (the comm., observing that this description of the origin of *darbha* makes known the superior virtue (energy) of the jewel (*maṇi* used as an amulet etc.) that consists of *darbha*, without, however, explaining the significance of *bindu* and *maṇi*) and “From ... was born the ... drop and the *darbha*”. As to the *bindu*, I would compare AVŚ. 10, 10, 19 (AVP. 16, 108, 9), where the barren cow which in this text is eulogized and to which many supernatural abilities and qualities are ascribed, is said to have been born out of the *bindu* (“globule”) that went up aloft out of *brahman*’s summit<sup>47</sup> and recall AVP. 16, 129, 3 “what of you, O waters, is the *bindu* of the waters within the waters ... that now I let go<sup>48</sup>: the preceding and following paragraphs, which run parallel, read “wave”, “calf”, “bull”, “embryo” etc. instead of *bindu*. It would appear to me that the *bindu* just as the embryo (*garbha*) in 16, 129, 7 (*hiranyagarbha* in AVŚ. 10, 25, 19) was considered to be a sort of ovary produced by (the roaring of) the ocean and developing into the *darbha*. It may be remembered, for instance, that in a later period the word *bindu* was, in the theory of dramatic art, used to denote the sudden development of a secondary incident which, like a drop of oil in water, expands and furnishes an important element in the plot, and that in Śivaism the term is employed for the eternal and omnipresent material cause of the pure worlds which God’s creative power causes to evolve with the result that the “pure realities” come into being<sup>49</sup>.

The story of the origin of the *darbha* is found in several *brāhmaṇa* passages<sup>50</sup>. When Indra slew Vṛtra, TS. 6, 1, 1, 7 informs us, “he died upon the waters. What of the waters was fit for oblation and sacrifice, accompanied by or presided over by a deity, that went up (and) away and became *darbha* (plural). In that he (the officiant) purifies (the sacrificer) with bunches of *darbha*, he purifies him with waters that are fit for oblation ...”, the author goes on to explain the significance of purification with two, three or more stalks. (See also TB. 3, 2, 5, 1). In MS. 3, 6, 3: 63, 4 the story runs, with some variation, as follows: when Indra had slain Vṛtra on the waters, “what of them was fit for sacrifice ... went out (of them) and became the (useful) plants (*ośadhayas*); of these the *darbhāḥ* are (the) fiery energy (*tejas*);

47. Compare the simile in MaitrU. 6, 35 “like drops that spring up continually ...” R. Pischel, in ZDMG 36, p. 135 was of the opinion that *bindu* here refers to a pearl.

48. For the complete context see Whitney and Lanman, op. cit., p. 581 (on AVŚ. 10, 5, 15 ff.). The waters are here used as a missile.

49. In AVP. 7, 7, 9 the *darbha* is called “a king who belongs to the ocean” or, rather “is the ocean’s” (*rājā samudriyaḥ*).

50. See also S. Lévi. La doctrine du sacrifice dans les *brāhmaṇas*. Paris 1898. p. 161.

these, one should know, are (the) dry (dried up) waters; it is their fiery energy that he secures. There are three kinds of waters, the celestial, the terrestrial and those that belong to the ocean. All these appeared as (??) *darbha*; that is why *darbha* is a means of purifying". The versions of the story given at KS. 23, 1: 73, 18 and KapS. 35, 7: 183, 9 are similar, but there is an addition: "that is why one purifies (or "makes clear", *punanti*) water with *darbha* (plural); in that one purifies (the sacrificer, *pāvayati*) with bunches of *darbha* one purifies him with the fiery energy of the waters, of the (useful) plants". See also KS. 30, 10: 192, 13; KapS. 46, 8: 282, 16 where bunches of *darbha* are likewise "identified" with the *tejas* of the waters and the plants. The author of TB. 2, 7, 9, 5 argues that *darbha* (plural) is the fiery energy (*tejas*) and brilliant vital power and prestige (*varcas*) of (the) water(s) and that by purifying somebody by means of bunches of *darbha* – explained by the comm. "particular branches furnished with some tubular *darbha* stalks" – one sprinkles him with *tejas* and *varcas*.

See also TB. 3, 2, 5, 1; ŚBM. 1, 1, 3, 5 (ŚBK. 2, 1, 3, 2): the *darbhāḥ* of which the strainers are made sprung from the waters which flowed over, when Vṛtra had been killed; they represent the water which was not putrified; also ŚBM. 7, 2, 3, 2. In TB. 3, 3, 2, 1 and ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 11 *darbha* (*darbha* grassstems) is briefly said to be (mean, represent) water. For water as a substitute for *darbha* see TB. 3, 7, 3, 4<sup>51</sup>. In MS. 1, 7, 2: 110, 4; KS. 8, 15: 99, 3 and KapS. 8, 3: 82, 6 the *darbhāḥ* are said to be, or rather represent, the waters and the plants.

In the section on the re-establishment of the sacred fires (*punarādheya*) the author of TS. 1, 5, 1, 4 observes that they are established with *darbha* (that is, not with firewood), in order to employ something that is not – like the wood used in the *agnyādheya* ritual – worn out by use (*ayātayāmatvāya*)<sup>52</sup>. "He establishes (the fire) with *darbha* (plural); verily after having won it from the waters and the plants he establishes it".

*Darbha*, being equivalent to water, is in certain circumstances to replace it: the man who offers the *agnihotra* with clarified butter should, in deviation from BhŚ. 6, 10, 8<sup>53</sup> prescribing that water should be poured into the milk, put two sprouts of *darbha* (*darbhataruṇa*) in it (6, 14, 16; also JG. 1, 2: 2, 11); cf. ĀpŚ. 6, 15, 5 mentioning one or two tops of *darbha* (*darbhāgre*; also ĀpG. 1, 22; BG. 1, 3, 11) stalks. HŚ. 3, 7, 116: 357 uses the compound *darbhatṛṇābhyām* (also found in ĀgnG. 1, 1, 1: 3, 21) and ŚŚ. 2, 7, 12; VaikhG. 2, 9: 28, 7 *kuśataruṇe*. The accompanying mantra is in ĀpŚ. "I do not take away thy ardour" which in 6, 6, 7 and MŚ. 1, 6, 1, 18 is used when a drop of water is added to the milk. See, e.g., HG. 1, 1, 27 and ĀgnG., l.c., dealing with the preparation of sacrificial butter.

One of the ceremonies that take place on the fifth layer of the great sacrificial structure (*agnicayana*) is the dragging of a bamboo pole in the four directions round the centre of the fireplace by the *adhvaryu*. To this pole this officiant has tied a frog, an *avakā* plant – which, like the frog, means water (ŚB. 7, 5, 1, 11; 9, 1, 2, 21) and

51. See p. 46; 60 above.

52. For the version of the story in ŚBM. and ŚBK. see p. 36 above.

53. Cf. Dhūrtasvāmin on ĀpŚ. 6, 15, 5 *pratiṣekapratyāmnāvah*.



a bunch of *darbha* grass (*darbhastamba*, BŚ. 10, 48: 50, 2) to the accompaniment of TS. 4, 6, 1 c ff. (VS. 17, 4 ff.). In these mantras Agni, being surrounded, is besought to be purifying and auspicious, to descend upon the earth and the waters and to bring the gods to the *yajña* (sacrificial worship) and oblation of those speaking; the frog is requested to make the rite auspicious. According to ŚB. 9, 1, 2, 20 ff., which mentions a bamboo-shoot instead of the *darbha* and declares these three to be three kinds of water, this is a rite of appeasement and gratification: when the fireplace is built up, Agni is being born and is born for every kind of food represented by the frog etc. See also TS. 5, 4, 4, 1 ff.

TS. 5, 6, 4, 1 f. furnishes us with an important piece of information. In a discussion of the *agnicayana* ritual it is stated that at a certain moment one offers on a bunch of *darbha* (*darbhastambe*); "the *darbhāḥ* are the *amṛtam* (the draught of) 'immortality', i.e. continuance of life), the *vīryam* (i.e. energy and virtue) of the earth; he offers on it, verily he is propagated". Here the earth, producer of life, appears as the great spring of power. Contact with the earth had a special significance, not only to the Vedic Indians but also to the Romans and the ancient Germans<sup>54</sup>. The soil, justly believed to have an invigorating power, was supposed to impart fresh energy. That is why, for instance, new-born children were, in ancient Germany, Africa and elsewhere, placed on the ground in order to impart strength to them. Grass pulled out with the earth sticking to the root was no symbol of the home soil in our sense of this term, it participated in the invigorating power of the soil. – Am I right in thinking that it is the *vīrya* of the earth that helps us in solving the difficulty presented by the adjective "made by energy" (*vīryakṛte*) which in TB. 2, 7, 17, 3 is added to the bunch of *darbha* on which the hair of the royal sacrificer is placed after he has been shaven?<sup>55</sup>

It will strike the attentive reader that the use of *darbha* is not infrequently prescribed in the same ritual context as that of branches or twigs of some important trees, among them the sacred *plakṣa*<sup>56</sup>. The he-goat (the victim to be killed on the occasion of an animal sacrifice) is touched and brought near and dedicated with two blades of *darbha* with the words "for refreshment thee" (*iṣe tvā*, notice the singular) and a green *plakṣa* branch with leaves which has been taken with "thou art an encourager" (*upāvīr asi*<sup>57</sup>) (MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 2; see also TS. 6, 3, 6, 1; 1, 3, 7 a etc.<sup>58</sup>; BhS. 7, 9, 11; ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 5; 8; 14, 7, 4). As to the *plakṣa*, according to the mythical story told at ŚB. 3, 8, 3, 10 ff. this tree (the *ficus infectoria* or *religiosa*)

54. See, e.g., A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, Berlin and Leipzig 1925, passim; W. Havers, in *Festschrift-P. Kretschmer*, Wien (Vienna) 1926, p. 55; H. Wagenvoort, *Roman dynamism*, Oxford 1947, p. 17 f. etc.; M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris 1949, 1975 (patterns in comparative religion, New York 1958, § 83 ff.); Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 83 etc.

55. See p. 83 below.

56. I refer to O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954, p. 268, s.v.

57. Uvaṣa on VS. 6, 7 explains this word as *upa samīpe avasthitaḥ avalī rakṣasīty upāvīḥ, dvīfīyah sakhā tvam asīty arthaḥ* (Mahādhara likewise). Hence Griffith's note (White Yajurveda, p. 52): "He takes up and addresses some grass which, as a companion, encourages and guards him in his work"; Eggeling (ŚB. 3, 7, 3, 9): "cheerer"; Keith, *Veda Bl. Y. S.*, p. 521 and van Gelder (MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 2): "impeller".

58. I refer to Keith, *Veda Bl. Y. S.*, p. 42.

represents the sacrificial essence that had originated in Tvaṣṭar's spittle. The frequent formula *iṣe tvā*<sup>59</sup> is pronounced in connexion with the cutting of a *palāśa* branch (VS. 1, 1; ŚB. 1, 7, 1, 2) or of a *parṇa* (or *śamī*) branch to drive the calves from the cows (TS. 1, 1, 1, 1; TB. 3, 2, 1, 3; ĀpŚ. 1, 1, 10 f.) (but this may also be done with blades or bunches of *darbha* (ĀpŚ. 1, 2, 3; see MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 18)); the putting of butter on the sacrificial cake (ŚB. 1, 2, 2, 6), the drawing out of the victim's fat (TS. 6, 3, 9, 3); the wiping off of the fat from the ladle (ĀpŚ. 6, 10, 10) and on various other occasions. The formula is stereotyped: the two *darbha* blades are obviously regarded as a unit.

From the classification found in GG. 4, 7, 9 ff. it may be inferred that *darbha* was considered the most valued of grasses<sup>60</sup>. In selecting the site of a house one should take into account that soil on which *darbha* grows is most suitable for – and should be chosen by – one desirous of brahminical illustriousness; soil covered with firm grass (*bṛhattṛṇaiḥ*) for one desirous of physical strength, soil covered with tender grass (*mṛdutrṇaiḥ*) by one desirous of cattle<sup>61</sup>. It is clear that these three types of men correspond with, or belong to, each of the three Aryan social classes. – The first article mentioned by Baudhāyana in his long enumeration of the requisites for the piling of the great sacrificial place is twenty-two bunches of *darbha*; after this follow the ghee, the horse, bricks, the golden image and so on (BŚ. 1, 27: 26, 1)<sup>62</sup>. When in long enumerations of the requisites for a sacrifice *darbha* occupies the first place before fuel etc. (ŚB. 5, 2, 3; BŚ. 28, 10: 361, 4), in a chapter on the *śrāmaṇaka* fire of a hermit the requisites to be collected are indicated by “*darbha* and so on”<sup>63</sup>, and in a following specification the *kūrca* (bundle of grass) for strewing round the fire is mentioned first (VaikhDh. 2, 1: 122, 6; 7), the authors betray their opinion on the relative importance of the sacrificial grass<sup>64</sup>.

From a passage such as ViSm. 1, 3 it may be concluded that *darbha* was also in the view of an author on *dharma* an essential element of the Vedic ritual<sup>65</sup>. When, after the night of Brahman, Viṣṇu purposed to create living beings he assumed the shape of a boar. The feet of this mythical animal were the Vedas (the fundamental

59. Keith, Veda Bl. Y. S., p. 42 (TS. 1, 3, 7 a) translated “for striving thee”, notwithstanding TS. 6, 3, 6, 1 incorrectly.

60. A Śivaite “who aims at (the highest goal) final liberation, shall worship Śiva with *darbha* grasses” (ŚivaPur., Rudra, 1, 14, 25).

61. *Darbha* growing in a field of sesame and having seven blades is very auspicious (Kanc, Hist. Dharm. II, p. 657).

62. Characteristically, the section on the prerequisites in the long and detailed description of the 1975 performance of the *agnicayana* (Staal, Agni, I, p. 240) begins as follows: “Quantities of *darbha* grass and *kuśa* grass are procured from Karalmaṇṇa in South Malabar”.

63. See also places such as AVPar. 33, 1, 7 *ośadhayo darbhaprabhrtayah*.

64. According to tradition an ancestor of the *rāja* of Kollengode brought *darbha* grass for the rituals conducted by the brahmins of Kerala; the supply of *darbha* and other requisites came to be a monopoly of his family; this right was supposedly granted by Indra (Raghava Varier, in Staal, Agni, II, p. 286. Cf. also Kunjunn Raja, ibidem, II, p. 308).

65. “Any (ritual) action performed without *darbha* and without the sacred cord is useless and brings no reward” (KūrmaPur. quoted in Kṛtyaratnākara, p. 47). – In GobhS. 1, 20 f it is said that the *darbhas* used in (solemn) sacrifices are greenish, those used in domestic rites yellowish, those used in *vaiśvadeva* offerings dark-pale.

eternal truth), his tusks the posts to which the victims are fastened, his teeth were the sacrificial rites (*kratu* which means something like “the faculty of realizing intentions by practical ingenuity etc.”<sup>66</sup>), his tongue was the sacred fire (remember Agni’s epithets *havyād* “eating the oblations”, the various references to Agni’s tongues etc.), his mouth the great fireplace (*citr*<sup>67</sup>), Brahman his head (cf. places such as ṚV. 2, 16, 2 where Indra is said to bear *kratu* (see above) in his head (*śiṛṣaṇi*) and as ṚV. 1, 152, 7; 2, 17, 3); his hair (i.e. his covering) the *darbha* (on the sacrificial place)<sup>68</sup>. – In GarbhaU. 5 the human body is ‘identified’ with the sacrificial ground: the *āhavanīya* is in the mouth etc., the hair of the head is the *darbhāḥ*. See also PrāṇāgnU. 3 and 4.

Just like *kuśa*, *darbha* occurs in passages dealing with objects made by man and used as tools. According to BhŚ. 1, 6, 5; ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 4 and Vaikh. 3, 5: 36, 7 the broom (*veda*) is made of *darbha*-blades. BhŚ. 1, 5, 11 (cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 12) makes mention of a rope or string made of *darbha*-blades with or without roots. In BhŚ. 1, 4, 4 (cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 10) the material is taken out of the grass for the *barhis*. The two cords (*raśane*) which are wound around the sacrificial post are likewise made of *darbha* (MŚ. 1, 8, 2, 23). – A very simple tool is required to draw a line on the sacrificial place; yet the authorities want this to be done with a blade of *darbha*: cf. GG. 4, 3, 2, where in a description of the *anvaṣṭakya* ritual<sup>69</sup> a line is drawn from north to south with the mantra “the asuras have been driven away”<sup>70</sup>. See also BGŚ. 1, 4, 4; 5, 1, 2. Yet it is not only because *darbha* is almost always available that it is prescribed for wiping the chariot of the newly married couple clean (MG. 1, 13, 3), but also because of its inherent properties: the alternative, a garment, should be new, “for the sake of unimpaired vigour” (ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 19). The same observation applies to the use of stalks or bunches of *darbha* as a substitute for a twig of a *palāśa* or *śamī* tree to drive away the calves (ĀpŚ. 1, 2, 3).

MŚ. 3, 6, 2: 61, 20 states that the patron of a sacrifice being consecrated is anointed with fresh butter which pertains to all the gods (*sarvadevatyam*) and that one stirs it up with two tufts of *darbha* (*darbhapiṅṅūla*): cf. TS. 6, 1, 1, 6 “he anoints with (a stalk) which has a tuft (*tūla*), for (in daily practice) men anoint with (a stalk) without a tuft”. – When on a certain occasion one is in doubt what one ought to do, viz. go to (the place of) the concluding bath or not, one should perform a purification with *darbhapiṅṅūlas*, for then one undertakes the bathing rite and one does not undertake it; one chooses both possibilities (KS. 37, 1: 85, 9); cf. TB. 2,

66. See J. Gonda, *The Vedic morning litany*, Leiden 1981, p. 109 ff.

67. J. Jolly, *The institutes of Vishnu*, S.B.E. 7, Oxford 1880 (Delhi 1965), p. 1 translated “pyre” but remember that *citīkṣpti* means “the arrangement of a sacrificial place” (the so-called altar, Śulbas. 2, 80) and that *citi* denotes the layers of the same (ĀpŚ. 16, 34, 3; 16, 35, 1; 19, 15, 4; HŚ. 18, 8, 14 etc.).

68. In the post-Vedic period the plants are said to have been produced from the hair of Viṣṇu (ViDhP. 1, 139, 12) or of Brahmā (e.g. MārKp. 48, 27). – For brahmins going to the forest to fetch twigs and *darbha* see, e.g., ŚivaPur., RudraS. 5, 58, 19.

69. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 455 f.

70. Even today the lines for a sacrificial ground are drawn with *darbha* grass (see, e.g., C.G. Diehl, *Instrument and purpose*, Lund 1956, p. 124). This ritual act is called *ullekhana* “the marking” (KS. 7, 4, 9). See also Staal, *Agni*, p. 306: “the area for the *mahāvēdi* is marked with *darbha* grass and the wooden knife”.

7, 9, 5, and the comm. on TB.: although it is not actually performed, the concluding bath is regarded as being performed by the cleansing with the *darbhapiñjūlas*<sup>71</sup>.

Being pure itself, *darbha* makes indeed an excellent sprinkler and means of purification and consecration. One should sprinkle one's house periodically with a handful of *darbha* (*darbhamuṣṭi*) and the five products of the cow in order to preserve its prosperous condition (JG. 2, 6: 31, 13; ĀgnG. 2, 5, 9: 88, 8). Because of its origin in those waters which remained pure and fit for sacrificial use (*śuddhā medhyāḥ*, ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2; see 1, 1, 3, 5 etc.), the *darbha* is *medhya*, 3, 1, 3, 18, and its stalks are a means of cleansing (*pavitram*, *ibidem*: "therefore the officiant purifies the patron of the sacrifice with a *darbhāpavitram*"; cf. MŚ. 4, 2, 7). See also ŚB. 13, 1, 1, 2, dealing with a rope made of *darbha*, which is a *pavitram*, by which the sacrificial horse is purified (also TB. 3, 8, 2, 3); ŚB. 5, 5, 4, 22; 7, 3, 2, 3 one sprinkles sacrificial food with *darbhāḥ* (*darbha* stalks), because these are *śuddhā medhyāḥ*; 9, 2, 1, 12, where Eggeling translated *darbhāḥ* by "sacrificial grass-stalks" (similarly, and "(he sprinkles) with their tops; the top (is sacred) to the gods"); 5, 2, 1, 8 one should know that *darbhāḥ* are *medhyāḥ*; TB. 3, 2, 5, 1 "in that (the *adhvaryu*) purifies the (sprinkling) waters with *darbhāḥ*, it is with those *medhyāḥ* waters, fit for sacrifice and presided over by gods that he purifies them". – The person who performs the *vāstuśamana* (expiation or purification of a new house) should sprinkle it everywhere with a branch of an *udumbara*, a *palāśa* or a *śamī* or also with a handful of *darbha* whilst going round it from left to right three times (BG. 3, 5, 19)<sup>72</sup>. – On the twelfth day of the *agnicayana* ceremonies the *adhvaryu* takes clarified butter, curds mixed with honey, a handful (*grumuṣṭi*) of *darbha* and a bunch of *avakā* plants; thereupon the *pratiprasthātar* proceeds to sprinkle the fireplace with the curds by means of the *darbha* and covers it with the bunch of *avakās* (BŚ. 10, 50: 52, 1; 14).

For sprinkling a victim with two blades of *darbha* see Kauś. 44, 10 (*vasāśamanam*). In a passage on the preparatory acts in connexion with the sacrificial material (*nirvāpakaraṇa*) Kauś. 61, 6 has the hide (from which a vessel with water has been taken) and the oblation sprinkled with the extremities (tops) of *darbha*<sup>73</sup>.

On the making of *darbha* strainers (*pavitram*) we find some information in ĀpŚ. 1, 11, 6 ff.: they should be made of two blades of *darbha* which are of the same size (breadth etc.), one span in length, the ends of which are uncut (because they are used in a rite for the gods<sup>74</sup>). They are cut with the mantra TB. 3, 7, 4, 11 aa "You are the pair of strainers that belong to Viṣṇu. Let Vāyu purify you with mind

71. It is no part of my task to discuss the ritual use of *darbha* as a purifier in post-Vedic and modern times. Let it suffice to recall that, for instance in South India, those who cannot bathe in water are recommended to bathe in or purify themselves with one of the products of the cow, sacred ashes, a mantra or *darbha* grass (C.G. Diehl, Instrument and purpose, Lund 1956, p. 74).

72. Sprinkling water by means of *darbha* is customary up to the present century. For instance, citing J.S. Campbell, Notes on the spirit basis of belief and custom, Bombay 1885 N.M. Penzer in C.H. Tawney's Ocean of story, II, <sup>3</sup>Delhi 1968, p. 229 informs us that in Bombay, when a woman dies in pregnancy, her corpse, after being bathed and decked with flowers and ornaments, is carried to the burning-ground, where her husband sprinkles water on it from the points of a wisp of *darbha* and repeats mantras.

73. See J. Gonda, The Savayajñas, Amsterdam Acad. 1965, p. 97; 135 f.

74. See above, p. 30 f.; 53; and 66.



(spirit, *manas*)” (which endows them with their particular quality) (by means of some instrument) not with one’s nail, holding some grass (*tyṅa*) or a piece of wood between (the *darbha* and the instrument). ĀpG. 1, 19 refers to this place, adding that no mantras are pronounced, obviously because it is a repeated action<sup>75</sup>. In JG. 1, 2: 2, 7 dealing with two stalks that are to be taken from the *prastara*<sup>76</sup> the author adds that they should not bear a young shoot in them and that the one who cuts them holds them between his thumb and third finger. For the use of two similar blades of *darbha* with unbroken points of one span’s length as “purifiers” see, e.g., HG. 1, 1, 23 (also BhG. 3, 16: 85, 3). – See also ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 18 “he (the *adhvaryu*) purifies him (the patron) with a *darbhapavitra*”.

Often mention is made of a pair of purifiers (*pavitre*)<sup>77</sup> which are laid, e.g. over the *ājya*-pot when it is filled (ĀpG. 1, 22); – the expression *vilāpyotpūya* (BŚ. 2, 17: 63, 1) means “having melted (the sacrificial butter) and purified it by means of a *pavitra* consisting of two *darbha* stalks”; see also places such as MŚ. 1, 5, 4, 18 – over a vessel in which water is poured (KŚ. 2, 5, 13); or are used to purify the sprinkling water (BhŚ. 2, 6, 13 cf. also ĀśvŚ. 5, 12, 15).

Other places attesting to the employment of *darbha* as an instrument of purification – *pavitrām vai darbhāḥ* (TB. 1, 3, 7, 1) – are ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 18 “(the officiant) purifies (the patron who is being consecrated) with a *darbhapavitra*; for unfit for sacrificial rites is man; he is foul within, because he speaks untruth, and *darbha* is fit for sacrificial use (*medhya*) and a *pavitra*”; TB. 1, 7, 6, 4 “he (the *adhvaryu*) purifies with 101 bunches of *darbha*: a man lives 100 years, he has 100 energies, his person (*ātmā*) is the 101<sup>st</sup>”; this place refers to the purification of the royal sacrificer who has the *rājasūya* performed: see also BŚ. 12, 9: 99, 11 and ĀpŚ. 18, 4, 5, adding in 6 that the sacrificer himself also applies ointment to his eyes with 101 *darbha* bunches, the right eye with 50 and the left eye with 51 (MS. 4, 4, 3: 52, 15)<sup>78</sup>. – See also TB.

75. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 79.

76. See ch. XI.

77. For a post-Vedic definition of the form and function of a *pavitrām* see, e.g., Mṛgendrāgama 6, 52: “two tops (of blades) of *darbha* as long as a span, doubled and connected together (i.e. of which the middle parts cling to each other and the ends are connected with each other, comm.); it is a means of destroying obstacles and deficiencies (faults), glowing by the fiery energy of the peculiar property of the (a) mantra”. – The term *pavitra* appears to have been transferred to various objects which are worn round the neck of the image of a god (*yajñopavīta* or *yajñasūtra*, the sacred thread), on its head (*śīromālā*, (urban), (*bāhumālā*, bracelet or *makuṣa*, crown), etc. These various objects are in the *āgama* literature collectively indicated by the same term, *pavitra* (Pūrvakāraṇāgama, 122, 16 f.). In the Śivaite cult of the Āgama literature a *pavitra* made of cotton – or of silk, bark, linen, *darbha* or *muñja* (Somaśāmbhupaddhati, Pavitrārohaṇavidhi, st. 11 ff.) – is every year on a fixed day put on the image of Śiva in his sanctuary. Validating all other regular ceremonials throughout the liturgical year this ceremony is a sort of general *prāyaścitta* rite neutralizing all bad or injurious consequences of defects and mistakes committed in worshipping Lord Śiva as well as various personal sins and omissions. One expects the god to make everything afflicted or injured free from affliction or injury and to make that which has been done badly perfect (st. 96 f.). The performer observes a vow. The ceremony includes also homage paid to Śiva by means of flowers, *dūrvā* grass, unhusked barley-corns (st. 113). See also Rauravāgama, ed. N.R. Bhatt, Pondicherry 1961, ch. 25 and for a discussion H. Brunner-Lachaux, Somaśāmbhupaddhati, II, Pondicherry 1968, p. VII ff. and J. Gonda, Medieval religious literature in Sanskrit, Wiesbaden 1977, p. 79 etc.

78. For particulars see J.C. Heesterman, The ancient Indian royal consecration, Thesis Utrecht, 's-Gravenhage 1957, p. 93 f.: 99. – See however also KŚ. 19, 2, 27; ŚB. 12, 7, 3, 22.



3, 2, 3, 4 (*sākṣāt pavitraṃ darbhāḥ*); 3, 8, 2, 3. AiB. 1, 3, 8 “they purify (the patron who is being consecrated) with 21<sup>79</sup> bunches of *darbha*”; BhŚ. 10, 5, 1 (three times, each time with seven clusters; also MŚ. 2, 1, 1, 40); cf. ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 5 f. referring to TS. 6, 1, 1, 7 f.; BGPar. 1, 3, 7 “he who is to perform Vedic rites should bathe at a sacred bathing-place, don a new garment, sip water, purify himself with 21 bunches of *darbha*”<sup>80</sup>.

In the remarkable passage GG. 1, 7, 21 ff. (KhG. 1, 2, 12 f.) the author states that the sacrificer takes two *darbha* blades from the *barhis*, makes purifiers (*pavitre*) of them and cuts them off, not with his nail, with the words “you are *pavitre*, belonging (sacred) to Viṣṇu (*vaiṣṇavyau*)”. Thereupon he wipes them with water with “by Viṣṇu’s spirit (mind, *manas*) you are purified (*pūte*)”. This passage is to a certain extent elucidated by BGP. 1, 3, 7 “it is recognized that *darbha* is the means of purification (*pavitra*), Viṣṇu is the *pavitra*, he is the firm foundation”. The underlying idea appears to be that Viṣṇu is the ultimate cause of the purificatory virtue of the *darbha*. — This god is indeed the representative of the eternal and omnipresent pervading and blessing stream of energy, who is believed to be identical with various mighty devices for ensuring the operation of the powers for good, to be identified also with various plants, to be a protector rendering important services to gods and men, to be identical with the sacrifice<sup>81</sup>. As to Viṣṇu’s *manas*, the “spirit” or “mind” — the term defies any attempt at literal translation — this is also in this case not only an important attribute of a (high) god, but also a substitute for its personal bearer<sup>82</sup>. In view of the paucity of the references to Viṣṇu’s role in the above process it may be asked, how far it was an accepted doctrine or how far officiants and sacrificers were aware of it.

Occasionally, the *darbha* and the *parṇa* tree — i.e. the *palāśa*, *butea frondosa* (cf., e.g., ŚB. 3, 3, 4, 10; 11, 7, 2, 8, the word *parṇa* also means “leaf”) which is regarded as the womb of all trees (AiB. 2, 1, 10 ff.) and as being or representing *brahman* and is likewise a means of purification etc.<sup>83</sup> — combine so as to form a composite purificatory agent. In TB. 3, 7, 4, 18 tt the *parṇa* (here a twig of this tree) and the *darbha* “which both purify the oblation offered to the gods” are recommended to the protection of Viṣṇu, the god who is often ‘identified’ with the sacrifice which he guards and protects<sup>84</sup>. This mantra (tt) should be recited when the so-called *sākhā-pavitra* “an instrument of purification fastened to a twig” (cf. BhŚ. 1, 6, 11 f.; ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 9 (and BŚ. 1, 3: 4, 1): without making a knot one should fix the lower ends of the *darbha* blades with the lower end of the twig and the upper ends with the

79. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 40 f. For the same number of *darbhāpiṅgulāni* see MS. 4, 8, 7: 115, 7. Staal, Agni, I, p. 317, describing the performance of a rite of purification (*kūsmāṇḍahoma*) in order to free the patron and his wife from evil mentions that the former is purified by a stroke of 21 blades of *darbha*, the latter by a stroke of 22 blades.

80. See also Staal, Agni, I, p. 329.

81. I refer to J. Gonda, Aspects of early Viṣṇuism, Utrecht 1954, <sup>2</sup>Delhi 1969, passim and especially p. 171 ff.; Viṣṇuism and Śivaism, London 1970, ch. 1.

82. J. Gonda, The creator and his spirit, Wiener Zs. f.d. Kunde Südasiens, 27 (1983), p. 5 ff.

83. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 109 f. etc., and, e.g., ŚB. 5, 3, 5, 11.

84. For particulars see J. Gonda, Vedic gods and the sacrifice, Numen. 30 (1983), p. 22 ff.

upper end; for the use of this instrument see, e.g., BhŚ. 1, 12, 14; ĀpŚ. 1, 12, 3 ff.; VaikhŚ. 3, 5: 36, 13 deposited by the *adhvaryu* to be used the next morning (ritual of full and new moon, ĀpŚ. 1, 14, 6). For threefold *darbha* – i.e. the purifier consisting of three<sup>85</sup> blades of *darbha* – fastened to a twig of the *palāśa* (= *parṇa*) tree and used as a strainer for the purification of sacrificial milk see TB. 3, 7, 4, 11 y and BhŚ. 1, 6, 13; ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 10.

Some relevant information is furnished in TB. 3, 2, 3, 3 f.: this strainer is threefold, because it is composed of the three breaths *prāṇa*, *apāna*, and *vyāna*, which are put into the patron of the sacrifice when it is used; it is fastened to a twig of the *parṇa*, which is connected with the *soma* (see ŚB. 3, 3, 4, 10), in order to give the twig identity of origin with the *soma*; “*darbha* is evidently a *pavitram*”. – The combination of four layers or bunches of *palāśa* sticks and four blades of *darbha* which have grown out of the stubbles (*upolava*<sup>86</sup>) is in alternate order to be placed as eightfold fuel on a *saltra* fire in which ghee is offered; the smoke should be inhaled, the trickling grease consumed by the man who performs this so-called *samudra* rite in hopes of better fortune (Kauś. 18, 32 ff. with the comm.). – Another reference to the combination of *darbha* and *parṇa* may find a place here. Contrary to custom a certain Keśin undertook the consecration whilst being seated, not on the skin of a black antelope (ŚB. 1, 1, 4, 3) but on *darbha* and *parṇa* (i.e. *parṇa* leaves) which he obviously regarded as equivalent (JB. 2, 53).

Dealing with the making of the *upaveśa*, a stick of green wood employed for stirring the sacrificial fire, BŚ. 1, 3: 3, 19 says that one should from the branch used – i.e. the *parṇa* branch (mentioned BŚ. 1, 1: 1, 7) with which the calves are driven away – measure the length of a span, fasten round it tubular stalks of *darbha* and prepare out of that the implement for purifying called *śakhāpavitra*. BhŚ. 1, 6, 11 speaks of a *pavitram* equipped with blades of *darbha* (*darbhamayam*). See also ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 7 ff. In the accompanying mantra (TB. 3, 7, 4, 11 y) the *darbha*, also described as threefold (*trivṛt*) and as being of the length of a span, is expected to make, as a most purifying strainer, the milk (of the *sāmnāyya* offering) fit for oblation (BhŚ. 13; ĀpŚ. 10). The mixture called *māsara* (*mahāvṛata* ritual) curds, pulverized barley etc. – is stirred with *darbha* blades (ĀpŚ. 19, 5, 8 f).

After having stated that in imitation of the gods, who placed plants (*ośadhi*) thereon, a bunch of *darbha* is put (on the middle of the site of the great fireplace, *agnicayana* ritual) the author of ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2 subjoins the following explanation: “when Agni is built up, he is born for all kinds of food; these *darbhāḥ* contain that, because they are both water and plants (*ośadhayaḥ*) ... As to the *darbhāḥ*, inasmuch as they are *darbhāḥ*, they are *ośadhayaḥ*, and thus one gratifies Agni by both kinds of food”. See also ŚB. 8, 3, 1, 11; 9, 5, 1, 36.

If a householder wishes to do himself the work both of the *hotar* and of the *brahman*, he should place on the *brahman*'s seat a parasol (providing honorific protection)<sup>87</sup>, or an outer garment, or a water-pot (an auspicious object) or a bolster in

85. For the significance of the number 3 see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 30 ff. etc.

86. See p. 77; 94.

87. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 146; 194; as to the garment, p. 142 etc., to the water-pot, p. 388; 409.

the form of a puppet of *darbha* (*darbhavaṭu*, GG. 1, 6, 21; KhG. 1, 1, 23 does not mention this object).

The institutor of the ceremony of preparing the sacred fires (*agnyādhāna*) begins by strewing blades of *darbha* in such a way that their panicles are turned towards the east and sits down on them (BŚ. 2, 1: 34, 2)<sup>88</sup>. After the construction and consecration of the fire-places *darbha* is spread all over the *mahāvedī*, “especially thick inside the *havirdhāna* and *sadas* halls, and on the *āstāva* area where the first *stuti* will be sung”<sup>89</sup>. TS. 1, 1, 11, 1 h (full and new moon sacrifices), BŚ. 6, 30: 194, 9 (*agni-ṣṭoma*) is recited: “Divine grass, I strew thee soft as wool, a good seat for the gods”.

A person desirous of studying the Veda should spread *darbha*, sit down on (this) *darbha* the panicles of which are turned towards (the auspicious regions), the east or the north, hold a handful of *darbha* in his right hand<sup>90</sup> and recite or sing ... (ĀśvG. 3, 2, 2; SVB. 1, 3, 2). The same custom obtains in case somebody wishes to study the *pravargya* texts: he should, outside the village, make a fire, enclose it (with grass), touch boiling water etc. and then with his teacher recite the texts, seated on *darbha* to the west of the fire and holding *darbha* in his hand (ĀpŚ. 15, 21, 10). When the teacher initiating a pupil is going to recite the *sāvitrī* etc. he sits down on a *kūrca*, the pupil on *darbhāḥ* (BG. 2, 5, 38 f.).

In ĀpŚ. 14, 20, 8 we read that on a certain occasion a *brahman* is seated on *darbha* grass (plural); also GG. 4, 2, 34 on a pure spot, on *darbha*; on the south side (ĀpG. 1, 21; BG. 1, 3, 10; BGPar. 1, 5, 4). Also BGŚ. 1, 1, 3. So are gods: manifestations of Viṣṇu in VaikhG. 3, 13: 44, 16 (*darbhāsaneṣu*); seats for the gods are on a pure spot arranged by means of eastward-pointed *darbha* (HG. 2, 18, 10); see also AVPar. 44, 2, 7. MG. 1, 6, 2 (which deals with the installation of a particular fire) seems to refer to seats of *darbha* or handfuls of *darbha* serving as seats. It is worth noticing that *darbha* used for this purpose could also be denoted by the term *pavitra* (e.g. Manu 3, 210).

The motive prompting Vedic man to sit down on the protective and purificatory *darbha* was the fear of being seated on the bare ground. ŚG. 4, 11, 20 forbids the *snātaka* explicitly to do so, no doubt in order to prevent the power with which he is charged from flowing away<sup>91</sup>.

In a later passage (VaikhG. 5, 1: 68, 5) the man who is to die and wishes to realize his identity with Brahman or the Universal Ātman is given the advice to sit or lie down on *darbha* which has been placed on sand<sup>92</sup>.

Generally speaking, it may be said that a person, who, participating in a ritual ceremony, is seated or standing on *darbha* (*kuśa*) grass is supposed to be in a sacred place. This seems also to be the meaning of VaikhG. 1, 10: 11, 17 “... and (he) lays, repeating the mantra “sitting on (supplying) a good seat for (to) the gods”

88. Staal, Agni, p. 283: “The *yajamāna* sits down on a blade of grass, placed upon his tortoise seat”.

89. Staal, Agni, p. 590 (*agnicayana*).

90. See p. 21 above and Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 469.

91. I refer to Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 63 f.

92. For later occurrences see, e.g., LiPur. 2, 21, 37: 46; BhāgPur. 11, 27, 19; Mayamata 4, 14.

(the grass is the subject)" (TS. 1, 1, 11 h) one eastward pointed grass on his own seat"<sup>93</sup>.

The direction toward which the *darbha* on which a person is to sit down has to be placed is indeed very often explicitly indicated. Thus a pregnant woman should wash herself on northward-pointed *darbha* and thereupon sit down to the west of the fire on *darbha* placed in the same way to be touched on her navel by her husband (GG. 2, 6, 2; for the mantra see PG. 1, 9, 5). Cf. also ŚŚ. 1, 6, 8 (on green *darbha*, the tips turned to the north); ĀśvŚ. 1, 24, 8<sup>94</sup>. It may be observed that in ŚG. 1, 8, 16 two *kuśa* strainers are consecrated ("belonging to Viṣṇu"), while their tips are turned to the east, the region of gods (cf. also ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 17) and (§ 21) dipped into the sacrificial butter, while these tips are turned to the north, the region of men. In a rite for the deceased ancestors the food that has been prepared is placed on and covered with *darbha* the tips of which are turned towards the south (BG. 2, 11, 36; see also 45 and BGŚ. 4, 3, 1 (arrangement of the sacrificial place)).

Sometimes *darbha* alone is not sufficient to sit upon. On the auspicious occasion of a *puṇyāha*<sup>95</sup> one should seat learned brahmins on a seat that is fitted out with *darbha* (ĀgnG. 2, 3, 3: 56, 20). For seats covered with *darbha* see also BG. 2, 11, 25 (*aṣṭakāhoma*); see also 3, 9, 3; BGPar. 1, 8, 21; 1, 9, 2; BGŚ. 3, 20, 9; 3, 23, 1. In TrisBrUp. 89 mention is made of wooden seats furnished with *darbha*, *kuśa* and the hide of a black antelope.

A detail that seems to be peculiar to one or two shools is the prescription at ĀśvG. 4, 7, 8 that the brahmins<sup>96</sup> who are invited to sit down as representatives of the Fathers at a *śrāddha* ceremony<sup>97</sup> are given double-folded *darbha* blades as a seat (*darbhān dviguṇabhugnān āsanam*)<sup>98</sup>. These blades are pulled out of the soil together with their roots (Hemādri, Cat. III, 1, 630; 637 f. etc.). Water is, moreover, poured into three vessels. In the additions to this passage the author of the Gṛhyapariśiṣṭa makes mention of an even number of blades offered to the deities on their seats. At first sight one might be tempted to explain the double-folded (*dviguṇa* (*bhugna*)) blades (see also GautP. 2, 2, 20) as a device to increase their efficacy. There is perhaps a more probable explanation: the adjective signifies that the seats are destined not only for the brahmins but also for the Fathers represented by them. The brahmins, though single persons, play, so to say, double parts. Hence also the number

93. Compare, e.g., BhāgPur. 11, 27, 19 f.: the worshipper should be seated on *darbha* whilst facing the east or the north and, provided with the ritual requisites, adore God's image which is occupied by God, while he himself, being in front of it, has mentally invoked God to occupy his body (*kṛtan̄yāsah*).

94. ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 12 mentions a cord (*śulba*) laid down in this way.

95. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 262 etc.

96. See, e.g., ViPur. 3, 15, 13 (in accordance with, e.g., BG. 2, 11, 15) "(in rites) for the Fathers one should feed odd numbers of brahmins, (in rites) for the gods even numbers".

97. See p. 38.

98. This translation was also proposed by Kane, Hist. Dh. IV (1953), p. 434; A.F. Stenzler, Indische Hausregeln, I, 2, Leipzig 1865, p. 132 following Nārāyaṇa: "... auf den Sitz dargereicht"; likewise W. Caland, Altindischer Ahnenkult, Leiden 1893, p. 140 (but the brahmins have not necessarily already seated themselves, because § 3 ff. expatiates upon their number etc.); compare, on the other hand, Manu 3, 208; 210; Oldenberg, Grihya-sūtras, I, p. 251: "... *darbha* blades, and a seat". See also ViPur. 3, 13, 20; 16, 39; 40 (the top of the *darbha* is turned to the south; in 40 *darbhāmūle*).

of blades? Notice that the brahmins are twice given water (ĀśvG. 4, 7, 7; 9) and, if they have received food for the Fathers in their hands, are given other food for themselves (21 ff.).

Among the objects that are to be placed on *darbha* is the so-called *praṇīta* water, which being purified is used for ceremonious purification (see, e.g., ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 32; 3, 1, 3, 1; BhŚ. 1, 17, 10 ff. etc.). When it has been brought forward, it is placed on *darbha* (plural, ĀpŚ. 1, 16, 10) and covered with blades of *darbha* (BhŚ. 1, 18, 9; ĀpŚ. 11). This water is intended to protect the sacrifice (TB. 3, 2, 4, 2 f.) by destroying the demons etc. For water placed on *darbha* see, e.g., also HG. 1, 1, 23; ĀpG. 1, 20 where it is also covered with *darbha*; BG. 1, 3, 10. In BG. 1, 2, 4 the things needed for the respectful reception of a guest are placed on *darbhāḥ* the panicles of which are turned towards the east. See also BGPar. 1, 8, 12; 28; BGŚ. 1, 1, 3; 1, 15, 5 (a vessel etc.). When fire is prepared according to the atharvanic method (Kauś. 69, 15 ff.), the apparatus (the wood to be set on fire<sup>99</sup>) is strewn with hairs of male animals (the 'symbolism' is clear), with cow-dung (cf. also ŚB. 12, 4, 4, 1) that is mixed with rice and barley corns and covered with two blades of *darbha* the tops of which are turned towards the east; these are breathed upon<sup>100</sup> with "you are two testicles" (see below, TS. 1, 3, 7, 1); thereupon the two pieces of wood used for kindling (*araṇi*) are put right.

Sacrificial ladles, the spoon and the *prāśitra* vessel (containing the cut off portion of the oblation which is eaten by the *brahman*) are heated ("the demoniac power, the evil spirit are burnt" BhŚ. 2, 4, 2), sprinkled and put on *darbha* (ĀpŚ. 2, 4, 10). See also ĀpŚ. 6, 8, 11 (where BhŚ. 6, 12, 3 reads "on the *barhis*"); and with regard to the various cups, vessels etc. (*pātra*) used in domestic rites (on *darbha* strewn to the north of the fire, ĀpG. 1, 16 ff.). Also, e.g., BG. 1, 3, 7; BGŚ. 4, 2, 9; 4, 4, 16<sup>101</sup>.

Likewise the lumps of flour (*piṇḍa*) offered in a *śrāddha* ceremony to the deceased ancestors (ĀngG. 3, 11, 2: 177, 6). The balls of rice destined for the deceased ancestors of the householder performing the *śrāddha* rites are deposited upon *darbhāḥ* (ViDh. 73, 17; see also MārKp. 28, 55); with the root-ends of these he wipes off the grease from his hands (22) after having done so; this was no doubt also daily practice, but then ordinary grass could no doubt serve<sup>102</sup>.

Performing a purification of the newly built house one puts the remainder of the oblations in front of the fire on bunches of *darbha* (BG. 3, 5, 18). – The man who hopes for the fulfilment of various wishes should on a spot that slopes eastward and is overgrown (grassy, full of roots) about the time of sunrise bring, after having washed his hands, to a bunch of *darbha* a jar filled with water and pronounce the mantra "turn to me every wish" (MS. 4, 2, 3: 24, 7)<sup>103</sup>. – When, at a wedding, the giver of the bride, the receiver, the girl and the brahmin are seated, the open

99. *abhimanthanam* seems to be synonymous with *adhimanthanam* in BhŚ. 7, 9, 12; ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 12.

100. Breathing upon is a form of transference of one's vital power; see, e.g. E. Stemplinger, in *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Aberglaubens*, Berlin and Leipzig 1927 ff., s.v. Atem; J. Wellhausen, in *Archiv f. Religionswissenschaft* 7, p. 38 ff.

101. Cf. *Mayamata* 18, 173.

102. Cf., e.g., *Mayamata* 12, 21.

103. For other contexts in which pots of water are required see, e.g., TS. 6, 4, 9, 2; 7, 5, 10, 1.



place between them is strewn with *darbha* (turned towards the east), on which is placed a brass cup with water mixed with barley; this is given (by the girl, comm.) to the bridegroom (MG. 1, 8, 3; cf. KG. 15, 3).

The man who performs the *anvaṣṭakya* ceremony should pour out the wash-water for the deceased on *darbha* which has been put in a pit or trench (GG. 4, 3, 6). See also places such as KŚ. 5, 4, 1.

When the pit has been dug from which the dust (mud, loose earth, *purīṣa*, representing "Agni of the dust") is obtained that is to become the material of which the *ukhā* pot is to be made (*agnicayana* ritual, see especially MS. 3, 1, 5: 6, 1 ff.; MŚ. 6, 1, 1, 24 ff.<sup>104</sup>), this dust is laid on a lotus leaf ("the back of the waters, the birth-place of Agni") which is placed on the hide of a black antelope ("the womb of ritual and religious merit", ŚB. 6, 4, 2, 6 and here, like the lotus leaf, "protection and shelter"). The hide is tied by means of a cord of *muñja* grass or of an *arka* plant. This bundle is placed on the back of an ass and brought to the sacrificial ground where a mound of earth is prepared. The mound is strewn with *darbha* and the bundle is placed upon it with "O plants, accept Agni here, who comes gracious towards you ...; this your regular (*ṛtviya*, "in accordance with the fixed time") womb has set him on his traditional abode" (MS. 2, 7, 5: 79, 10–13; 3, 1, 6: 8, 5; MŚ. 6, 1, 1, 40). It is clear that the *darbha* is more than a simple under-layer. Addressed as an intelligent person it is supposed to fulfil an indispensable function in the series of ritual actions.

A stalk of grass is also used to take some liquid (*in casu* sour milk) out of a vessel (ĀpŚ. 12, 24, 5; VaikhŚ. 15, 31: 209, 22).

A vessel filled with water that is required for ritual purposes is covered<sup>105</sup> with *darbha* (ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 1; BhG. 1, 3: 3, 5; HG. 1, 1, 23; ĀsvG 4, 7, 10; ĀpG. 1, 20). See also BGŚ. 5, 1, 5; 7. Occasionally there is difference of opinion with regard to the necessity of this act. Thus Śālīki, who often disagrees with Baudhāyana, held, in contrast to the latter, the view that the vessel used in preparing the *brahmaudana* should not be covered with the two *darbha pavitras* and not be consecrated with mantras (BŚ. 20, 16: 34, 15, cf. 2, 13, 16). This view was no doubt based on the consideration that the *brahmaudana* was, in a way, a secondary ritual meant to raise the domestic fire to the higher status of the *gārhapatya* fire which, being consecrated, is to become the *dakṣiṇāgni*<sup>106</sup>. See also MŚ. 1, 5, 1, 20 where the butter used for the same ritual is not purified by means of *darbha*.

In a section on the so-called *dasahotar* mantra which identifies ten functions and activities (and their effects) of the person of the sacrificer with ten parts or elements of the sacrificial ritual (see TĀ. 3, 1–10)<sup>107</sup> it is told (TB. 2, 2, 1, 1 ff.) that when

104. I also refer to N. Tsuji, in Staal, Agni, II, p. 139 ff.

105. As is well known trees and plants sometimes owe their ritual function to their name. For instance, barley grain (*yava*) is sown with the wish "that they ward off (*yavayān*) evil (*agha*) from me" (ŚB. 13, 8, 3, 13). It is, on the other hand, also possible to draw conclusions with regard to the outward appearance and other properties of a plant from what is said about the use made of it or about the effect that use is believed to have. Thus *darbha* is used as a covering for the sake of softness (*arūksatāyai*, ŚB., l.c.).

106. For particulars see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 232 ff.

107. On the *hotar* formulae now see the notes in Krick, Feuergründung, p. 287 ff. etc. (see Index, p. 650).

Prajāpati wished to create creatures he beheld this mantra, recited it mentally and made an oblation on a bunch of *darbha* (*darbhastambe*). Thereupon he was able to emit (create, *asṛjata*) creatures. The man who desires to create offspring should act in the same way and sacrifice on a bunch of *darbha* (which is standing on the earth (ground), comm.), because this is the womb from which Prajāpati created (*asṛjata*) creatures (the comm. quotes “the *darbhāḥ* represent the *amṛta* and the energy of the earth; on that he makes an oblation, he propagates offspring”). The following paragraphs run to a great extent parallel with a passage in KS. 9, 16 (which is quoted below): If a brahmin who knows sacred knowledge (*vidyā*) does not have a good reputation, he should in the wilderness tie a bunch of *darbha* into a bundle and (recite and) explain the *caturohotar* litany which is the highest hidden (*guhya*) *brahman* of the gods. He makes this manifest (*prakāśam*) with the result that he becomes famous (*prakāśa*) (among the gods, comm., and) among the creatures. The *darbhastamba* is said to contain fire (to be rich in fire, to be like fire, *agnivān*), so that “he explains the litany in the presence of “something fiery” (*agnivati*): “just as the fire is the support of the oblations (*homādharāḥ*) the bunch of *darbha* is charged with that function” (comm.). – See also TS. 5, 6, 4, 1 f. “he offers on a bunch of *darbha*. This is *amṛtam*, the energy of the (earth)”; KS. 22, 6: 61, 14; in BGŚ. 3, 20, 12 (Nārayaṇabali) *bali* offerings are placed on *darbha* (plur.).

“He who, not being a brahmin, has recited sacred knowledge, but is not pleased (with it), should, after having gone to the wilderness, having tied a bunch of *darbha* (*darbhastamba*) into a bundle, having seated a brahmin on the south side (on one’s right side, also TS. 6, 4, 9, 2), explain (in detail) this *caturohotar* litany. The *caturohotar* litany is, one should know, the hidden (*aniruktam*, unpronounced, i.e. being beyond verbal expression) *brahma* of the gods. Thus he makes that, when it is being pronounced (explained), manifest. He has tied a bunch of *darbha* into a bundle before he explains. A bunch of *darbha*, one should know, is Agni. He explains over Agni (the fire). A brahmin is seated towards the south. The brahmin is the witness of creatures (cf. TB. 2, 2, 1, 2 ff.)<sup>108</sup>. He explains before a witness. Both the one who explains and the one who is seated towards the south (on the right side) are capable of earning a good reputation (becoming renowned). To the one who sits on the south side he should give a boon (offer a choice). The respectability (renown) which he on that occasion acquires he secures by means of the boon” (KS. 9, 16: 119, 18 ff.). – Notice that here the god Agni is explicitly stated to be represented by a bunch of *darbha*. This may, to a certain extent, help us understand the occurrence of images of Hindu gods made of grass (see below)<sup>109</sup>.

108. On the brahmin seated in the south see J. Gonda, *Die Religionen Indiens*, <sup>2</sup>I, Stuttgart 1978, p. 142 ff.; H.W. Bodewitz, *The fourth priest*, in *Supplement to Numen* 45, Leiden 1983, p. 33 f.

109. The preparatory ceremonies of the *agnicayana* are partly *nirukta*, partly *anirukta*, because the great fireplace (Agni) is Prajāpati, who is both *nirukta* and *anirukta*. With what one does with a mantra one restores his *nirukta* and limited form, with what one does without a mantra his *anirukta* and unlimited form. His outer forms are *nirukta*, his inner forms are *anirukta* (ŚB. 7, 2, 4, 29 f.). Among the actions which are to be performed without a mantra – that means, which need no special consecration or confirmation of their purpose – is the placing of a *darbhastamba*, among the others the making of a libation on it.

In the chapter on the so-called *cāturhauṛka*, an observance relating to the study of a special section of the ritual, KG. 43, 4 informs us that after sacrificing one fixes in the ground, to the east of the fire, a *darbhastambha* (*sic*, not *-stamba* “bunch”, in all manuscripts and commentaries), that is “a stem, post or pillar of *darbha*”, or, rather, “surrounded, enwrapped by *darbha*” or even “wrapped in *darbha*”. The compound seems to be a hapax. A brahmin is invited to sit down to the south (of the fire). Whereas the function of the brahmin is clear – he is to avert impending danger expected from the south<sup>110</sup> –, that of the *stambha* is a puzzle. The commentator Brāhmaṇabala adds that it is to be placed in cowdung (a means of purification) containing lumps of clay and is *brahmaprakṛti* which may mean “of the nature and character of Brahman or Brahmā”. A *stambha* is a post or pillar<sup>111</sup> – e.g. *dhvajastambha* “flag pillar”. Pillars, representing the *axis mundi*, have a cosmological as well as a soteriological function<sup>112</sup>. Being intermediaries between heaven and earth and between the divine world and earthly life they are means of coming into contact with the gods, of attaining their abode or of communicating with the supermundane sphere. They make the place where they have been erected the centre of the world and as such sacred. Brahmā, on the other hand, is in post-Vedic iconography *kuśadhvaja*, that is to say *kuśa* is his banner or emblem (e.g. Mayamata, 36, 7<sup>113</sup>), and it is this grass that he also holds in one of his hands (36, 5). We also know that this god is one of the deities worshipped on the occasion of the consecration of trees, *tulsī* plants, etc. (BhavPur. II, 3, 7, 2; II, 3, 10, 7 ff.; II, 3, 15, 2)<sup>114</sup>. Since, moreover, images of deities – Śiva, Bhairava, Viṣṭi<sup>115</sup>, Mārgapālī<sup>116</sup> – are sometimes made of grass, the conclusion does not seem to be inconceivable that the *darbhastambha* of KG. 43, 4 was believed to be a manifestation of Brahmā or of the Brahman. This would remind us, to a certain extent, of a traditional custom in Roman antiquity: at the *lectisternia*, a repast of the gods “which does not necessarily imply a personal notion of the godhead”<sup>117</sup>, the *deorum capita* – which may have meant, either, literally, “the heads of the gods”, or as *pars pro toto*, “their persons” – were represented by *verbenae* (“herbage, foliage”), also called *struppi* (Festus, 473 L.; Paulus 56 L.; cf. Livius, 40, 59, 7). The presence of Brahmā at the *cāturhauṛka* ceremony is perfectly intelligible, because having come into existence as the first among the gods “he taught the knowledge of Brahman which is the foundation of all knowledge, to his eldest son” (MuU. 1, 1, 1; cf. also ŚVU. 5, 6). According to Mbh. 3, 194, 12 he is *caturveda*,

110. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 54; for clay, *ibidem*, p. 482, s.v. clay and clod.

111. For various pillars called *stambha* see H. Zimmer, *The art of Indian Asia*, I, New York 1955, p. 324.

112. See, e.g., M. Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, New York 1961, p. 33 ff.; J. Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, Delhi 1969, ch. X.

113. See B. Dagens, *Mayamata*, édition, traduction et notes, II, Pondicherry 1976, p. 372.

114. For particulars see Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 214 ff.

115. See Meyer, *op. cit.* I, p. 186; II, p. 163; 165. For puppets made of grass and (or) bark and representing “spirits” in Australia see E.A. Worms and H. Petri, *Die Religionen der Südsee und Australiens*, Stuttgart 1968, p. 170 f.

116. Meyer, *op. cit.* III, p. 310, s.v.

117. G. Wissowa, in Pauly-Wissowa, *Real-Encyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft*, Stuttgart 1896 ff., XII, 1108; see also H. Wagenvoort, *Roman dynamism*, Oxford 1947, p. 21 ff.

i.e. “embracing the four divisions of the Veda” and he is often represented with manuscripts of the Veda in his hands<sup>118</sup>. Occasionally, Sarasvatī, the goddess of learning and wisdom, is regarded as his wife (e.g. MatsyaPur. 3, 32). The compound “with 56 sprouts (*aṅkura*) of *darbha*” in Brāhmaṇabala’s note (*śaloṣṭagomaye śaṭpañcāśad darbhāṅkurair brahmaṇprakṛtiṃ darbhastambhaṃ nihatyā*) belongs either to *nihatyā* or, what seems more probable, to the *stambha*: “enwrapped by 56 sprouts of *darbha*”. Why 56, a comparatively rare number? Does it represent 7 (a number of completion and perfection) times 8 (an auspicious and cosmic number)<sup>119</sup>? The number 8 is often found in connexion with the Indra tree, another manifestation of the *axis mundi*<sup>120</sup>.

In case the performer of a domestic sacrifice wished to do himself the work of both the *hotar* and the *brahman*, he should place on the seat of the latter a parasol – who no doubt is to represent that functionary just as the invisible Buddha is represented by a throne surmounted by that object – an outer garment – which is his outward appearance (ŚB. 13, 4, 1, 15) – a water-pot (*udakamaṇḍalu*) – a well-known utensil of ascetics etc. – or a puppet<sup>121</sup> made of *darbha* (*darbhavaṭu*) (GG. 1, 6, 21; cf. KhG. 1, 1, 23; KauthG. 2), which obviously serves the same purpose.

Those who undertake to perform the non-Vedic Dhūrtabali – Dhūrta (BGŚ. 4, 2) is a name of Skanda – have to make an image of the god, to place this to the west of a branch of the *udumbara* (the ficus glomerata) with many leaves and twigs and a fresh top and thereupon to wrap a cord (*pratisara*<sup>122</sup>) round the image and the branch. Both, the god as well as the *udumbara*, represent fecundity and the “souls” of the deceased<sup>123</sup>. The performers probably expect to get hold of their combined power.

A particular but wholly intelligible use is made of *darbha* in Kauś. 26, 30. When a person is attacked by some disease caused by gandharvas, apsarases or demons, one should make an offering in a cup or jar containing heated charcoal which has been placed on the patient’s head; (in order to protect this one sees to it that) there is a covering (*iṅḍva*)<sup>124</sup> of *darbha* under the cup. The *darbheṇva* which in ĀpG. 4, 8 is placed on the head of the bride to bear the yoke-hole through which one lets water flow is no doubt the same thing<sup>125</sup>.

The rope or yoke-band with which the new garment given to the bride is fastened on consists of *muñja* or *darbha* (KG. 25, 4). The ropes of the swing of the *mahāvratā* is of *darbha* (AiĀ. 5, 1, 3). – According to BŚ. 15, 2: 205, 9 (cf. also 15, 4 and 15, 5) there are two ropes to be used to tie the sacrificial horse (*aśvamedha* ritual), one

118. I refer to H. Zimmer, Myths and symbols in Indian art and civilization, New York 21947, p. 100; 191; 210.

119. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 38 f.

120. See Meyer, op. cit., III, p. 105; 108; A. Mitra Shastri, India as seen in the Bṛhatsaṃhitā of Varāhamihira, Delhi 1969, p. 119 ff.

121. Not “a bolster” (Oldenberg); *vaṭu* = *baṭu*.

122. A *pratisara* is often believed to have an amuletic function; see, e.g., Caland, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 50; Zachariae, Kleine Schriften, p. 228 ff.

123. I refer to Meyer, Trilogie, I, p. 136; 141; 152; II, p. 78 f.; III, p. 192 f. etc.

124. For this compound see also GautP. 1, 3, 2 and *kuṣeṅḍva* in PG. 3, 7, 3.

125. Cf. AVŚ. 14, 1, 39 ff. and the notes by Whitney and Lanman, AthV. Saṃhitā, p. 747 f.

made of *muñja*, one of *kuśa*; ĀpŚ. 20, 2, 7; VārŚ. 3, 4, 1, 14 give their readers the option between both materials. However, TB. 2, 8, 2, 3 f. states that the rope is made of *darbha*, because the horse, roaming about, meets with many impurities and *darbha*, being a *pavitram*, purifies him so that he will be immolated as a purified victim.

BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 12, relating the differences between the *agnyādheya* and the *punarādheya* ritual, informs us that instead of a woven texture or “nest” (receptacle) made of *muñja* (*muñjakulāya*, BŚ. 2, 6: 42, 15) which is to cover the inside of a pan to avoid injury (cf. ŚB. 6, 6, 1, 23; ĀpŚ. 16, 9, 5) a *darbhakulāya* is required, adding that instead of fuel-sticks used for taking the sacred fire forward (cf., e.g., ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 11) one should use *visūrmikāḥ* (i.e. *kalāpāḥ* “bundles or bands holding single parts together”, Bhavasvāmin) made of *darbha* (cf. BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 5); moreover, one kindles the three sacred fires with *darbha*<sup>126</sup>. These objects and the *darbhakulāya* are in 3, 1: 69, 4 mentioned together with other requisites, viz. a repaired chariot, a patched up garment, a bullock that has been let loose again (see also BŚ. 3, 3: 70, 16; BhŚ. 5, 21, 1; ĀpŚ. 5, 29, 1; KB. 1, 5, 22). The chariot etc. are to be given as *dakṣiṇās*; they are renewed (patched up etc.), KB. 23 rightly observes, for it is a renewed ritual ceremony (*punaḥkarma*). *Dakṣiṇās*, which are no fees or remunerations, correspond indeed as a rule with the character of a sacrificial ceremony; their quantity and quality are related to its purpose (cf. ŚB. 13, 1, 5, 6). Notice also that for taking the *āhavanīya* fire out of the *gārhapatya* one should employ *darbha* blades which have dried up by the wind for a year (BhŚ. 5, 19, 8; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11 (cf. also 9)); as observed by Caland<sup>127</sup>, they represent the fuel used when the fire is established for the first time. What about the above use of the *darbha* instead of *muñja* or fuel-sticks? Is it only prescribed because it is a weaker material than sedge-like grass or wood and would it therefore suffice for the present purpose? ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 7, stating that the *punarādheya* requires either new materials or the objects used at the first *agnyādheya* implies the use of such substitutes. Or is the *darbha* preferred because it averts or destroys<sup>128</sup> evil, *in casu* the evil (death of a son, etc., Baudh. Karm. 1, 18; cf. TS. 1, 5, 1, 4; BhŚ. 5, 17, 5 f.; ĀpŚ. 5, 26, 3 etc.)<sup>129</sup>, which induced the sacrificer to re-establish his fires? Notice that in this ceremony Agni is explicitly requested to remove the misfortune (TS. 1, 6, 6, 2; BhŚ. 5, 20, 7 and see ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 6; 10) and also that the *punarādheya* was in the circumstances mentioned at ĀpŚ. 5, 29, 12 f. (cf. Bh. 7, 21, 13) performed by way of a *prāyaścitta*<sup>130</sup>.

Because *darbha* is a *pavitram* (also TB. 3, 8, 2, 3), a thing made of or consisting of *darbha* is believed to be fit for cleansing, purificatory or consecratory purposes; for instance, the rope which is put over the sacrificial horse in order to purify it so as to become a purified victim, because whilst roaming about this animal meets with many impurities (TB. 3, 8, 2, 3, f.). “He (the officiant) causes the patron to put on a *lārṇya* (i.e. a garment made of *trpā*). A *lārṇya* is (represents) sacrificial wor-

126. See p. 36 f.

127. Caland, Śraut. Āpast. I, p. 172; see also p. 171, on 5, 27, 7.

128. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 92; 282 f.

129. See also Caland, Śraut. Āpast. I, p. 170.

130. Cf. also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 293; 362, and, e.g., VāsDh. 25, 3 f.; Manu 11, 148.



ship. He causes him to be abundantly furnished with sacrificial worship. He makes him put on something consisting of *darbha*. Now, *darbha* is a *pavitram*. He purifies him. He (a patron) who has a *vājapeya* sacrifice performed<sup>131</sup> wishes to obtain (the) (re)creative power (called *vāja*<sup>132</sup>). Plants (*ośadhayah*) represent *vāja*. That he causes him to put on something consisting of *darbha* is in order to obtain *vāja*” (TB. 1, 3, 7, 1 f.). “The garment is made of *darbha* in order to be a means of purification” (MS. 1, 11, 8: 169, 18; KS. 14, 7: 206, 13, *vājapeya*; cf., e.g., ĀpŚ. 18, 5, 8).

In ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8 it is said that one of the officiants makes the lower part of the body of the patron’s wife, which is impure, pure by giving her a cloth made of *kuśa*; one should know that *darbhāḥ* are *medhyāḥ* “fit for sacrifice, ritually pure, not defiling (but purifying) by contact etc.”. Then the wife is considered able to propitiate the sacrifice. A counterpart of this ritual clothing is found in VaikhG. 5, 2: 71, 5: the bearers of a corpse should be relatives ... who should have bathed and be dressed in (under-)garments made of *darbha* cords (*darbharajjusaṃvīlāḥ*) and in upper-garments of *darbha* (*darbhāambaradharāḥ*). This ‘mourning-garment’ was no doubt to protect themselves against evil influences, *in casu* contamination by death (in Latin, *contagio funesta*)<sup>133</sup>.

*Darbha* is, in performing rites, also used for the purpose of illuminating (BG. 1, 3, 11; HG. 1, 1, 27; ĀpG. 1, 22; BhG. 1, 3: 3, 10). A bunch (*pūla*) is used to take some fire out of a vessel and to carry it round (VaikhG. 3, 16: 47, 15).

*Darbha* also serves as a medium for fire to be kindled on the *āhavanīya* hearth<sup>134</sup>. One should procure *darbhāḥ* that have sprung from the stubbles (*upolavāḥ*, i.e. *ālavebhya utthilāḥ*<sup>135</sup>, or “have been cut near the roots”, where the plants are always solid, the underground rootstocks being often well developed) and have knots or joints (*parutka*, ĀpŚ. and comm.) or are once cut off (*parukṇa*, BhŚ.) and have dried in the wind for a year light fuel (*idhma*) consisting of these and lift them up to be deposited on the *āhavanīya* (i.e. to become the burning *āhavanīya* fire): see BhŚ. 5, 19, 8; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11 (*punarādheya*; cf. 5, 29, 13 for the *punarādheya* as a *prāyaścitta* and remember the purificatory power of *darbha*)<sup>136</sup>; TS. 1, 5, 1, 4 mentions only *darbhāḥ*; VaikhŚ. 1, 19: 20, 12 speaking of strewing *darbhāḥ* and old *darbhāḥ* deviates from the above rule. See also ŚB. 2, 2, 3, 11.

During the third service of a soma ceremony the officiant plunges the stalks of eight handfuls of *darbha* into (the fire), and bears them flaming over all the hearths

131. For *yajate* with reference to the institutor of a sacrifice see J. Gonda, *The medium in the Ṛgveda*, Leiden 1979, p. 137 ff.

132. For *vāja* see Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 48 ff.

133. In the entire so-called primitive and ancient world mourning had a ritual character. In ancient Greece and very often in Christian countries it included, among other customs, wearing black; the Israelites rend their upper garment or tear their clothes to pieces, putting on a mourning-garment (e.g. Gen. 37, 34; 2 Samuel 3, 31), which, being of a dark colour and made of coarse textile, is usually denoted by the term “sackcloth”. These customs are, however, largely conventional (see, e.g., H. Ringgren, *Israelitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 219).

134. See, e.g., also Varāhamihira, BS. 48, 34.

135. See p. 94 below.

136. For the *darbhakulāya* (used as a tinder instead of the *muñjakulāya*, BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 5) see p. 129 and, in general, Krick, *Feuergründung*, p. 518, n. 1408.

(*dhiṣṇyas*, MŚ. 2, 5, 2, 9; cf. also ĀpŚ. 13, 14, 5, cf. BhŚ. 14, 13, 14). See also ĀpŚ. 13, 11, 2 (likewise evening service). During the morning and midday services burning pieces of wood (embers) are required for this purpose (BhŚ. 13, 17, 15; ĀpŚ. 13, 11, 2); see also K.S. 26, 1: 121, 7 with the explanations: “for these (two services) possess the pure *soma* juice; flaming *śatākas*<sup>137</sup> during the third service; by these this also becomes possessed of the pure *soma* juice”. In a passage which probably is of Vaikhānasa origin<sup>138</sup> a *darbhalka* (*sic*) “firebrand consisting of *darbha*” appears to be together with a burning charcoal the fuel required for cooking a mess of rice (VaikhG. 1, 12: 13, 12). In VaikhDh. 2, 15: 132, 5 a *darbhalkā* (*sic*), in all probability a stalk of *darbha* set on fire, is used as a means of purifying food that has been spoiled by a dog, a crow etc.

A remarkable function is ascribed to the two *darbha* stalks that are placed in the process of making fire, as described in TS. 6, 3, 5, 1 ff. etc. (see also Kauś. 69, 15 ff. above). After the *adhvaryu* has placed a fire-stick (a piece of wood that is fit for sacrifice) on the *vedi* with “thou art the birthplace of Agni” (KŚ. 5, 1, 28) he puts down on it two fresh blades of *kuśa* (KŚ. 29) or of *darbha* (ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21; BhŚ. 7, 9, 12; ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 12) the tops of which are turned towards the east on either side of the fire-stick (*adhimanthasakala*) with the mantra *vṛṣṇau sthūh*. This has been translated by “ye are sprinklers” (or “stallions, males”, Griffith, relying on the commentator’s note: *sektārau* VS. 5, 2); “ye are males” (Eggeling, ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21); “ye are the two male ones” (Keith, TS. 1, 3, 7 i; 6, 3, 5 r); “ihr seid die beiden Hoden” (Caland, ĀpŚ.); “ye are the testicles” (van Gelder, MŚ. 1, 5, 3, 1 and Kashikar, BhŚ.). The last translation<sup>139</sup> is no doubt right, and at least in accordance with the tradition: “(in placing the stalks of *darbha* and pronouncing the mantra MS. 1, 2, 7) he deposits (imparts) semen, for no semen is imparted to him who does not possess them” (MS. 3, 9, 5: 121, 6); “for the creatures are not born without testicles, in order to procreate offspring” (KS. 26, 7: 131, 4; KapS. 41, 5: 241, 7) and Mahīdhara on VS., l. cit. “just as a man and a woman in order to procreate a son sprinkle *vīrya* (energy, semen), you both bestow the ability of producing fire to the two *araṇis* (the two pieces of wood constituting the apparatus for kindling fire by attrition)”. These places are perfectly clear: the *darbha* stalks, representing the vital force of nature, are here considered to fulfil the same function as the testicles in the corresponding physiological process.

When the interesting and complicated establishment of the *brahmaudanika* fire as described in BŚ. 2, 13 (and comm.<sup>140</sup>) is undertaken, this should be attained from a frying-pan or from the *uttapanīya* fire, i.e. the special fire of a man who having a fixed abode has not yet established his sacred fires<sup>141</sup>. This fire has been obtained from the glowing ashes of his hearth by means of a piece of earthenware, which sets on fire a handful of *darbha*, that in its turn sets fire to a second handful, which is by means of a third handful of *darbha* to kindle the *uttapanīya* fire. It is intelligible

137. See also Caland, Śr. Āp. II, p. 279.

138. I refer to J. Gonda, The āghāra ritual of the Vaikhānasas, Torino 1981, p. 25.

139. See also Eggeling, Śat. Br. II, p. 91, n. 1, and I, p. 389, n. 3.

140. See W. Caland, Baudhāyana Śrauta Sūtra, III, Calcutta 1913, Index, p. 45.

141. The ancients and so-called primitive peoples often took their fire from the fire of other men.

that people destitute of modern aids and appliances had recourse to this cumbrous, though ingenious, method, but one should, on the other hand, be aware of the purificatory power of the grass by which the profane fire came, in the course of this process, to be suitable for sacrificial purposes<sup>142</sup>. – There is a similar procedure towards the end of the *pravargya* sacrifice. Then the *pratiprasthātar* takes successively three handfuls of wood splinters (*śalākāmuṣṭīn*) to light the first bundle at the *āhavanīya* and the second handful with the burning first one; the third handful is lighted at the second one (BhŚ. 11, 13, 5 ff.<sup>143</sup>; ĀpŚ. 15, 13, 3<sup>144</sup>; similarly, BŚ. 9, 13: 284, 14. In MŚ. 4, 4, 8, however, the officiant is said to kindle bundles of *darbha* (*darbhakūrcān*).

The grass which is strewn round the ritual fire is called *darbhāḥ*, e.g., in BhG. 1, 2: 2, 3 (with the ends towards the east i.e. godward, ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 1; see also MG. 1, 8, 3, or the north, *upanayana*); see also HG. 1, 1, 11 f.; ĀpG. 1, 12 f.; BhG. 2, 11: 43, 2; in GG. 4, 2, 20 mention is made of a handful of *darbha* that has been severed with one cut; BG. 1, 3, 4 “he encloses the fire with *darbha* (plur.) the tops of which are turned towards the east”. – Likewise the grass that is strewn on other parts of the sacrificial ground: on the place destined for the *brahman* (HG. 1, 1, 14; BhG. 1, 2: 2, 5); to the west of the fire (twofold *darbhāḥ*, BhG. 1, 7: 7, 1, *upanayana*; 1, 15: 51, 1, wedding). – Before the beginning of an *iṣṭi* the *adhvaryu* should go and fetch *barhis* consisting of *darbha* (*darbhamayaṃ barhis*, BhŚ. 1, 3, 7; ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 5)<sup>145</sup>.

Concerning the way in which the *darbha* is laid down round the ritual fires ĀpŚ. 1, 14, 14 f. gives the rule that the blades that are placed on the east and west sides of the fires should have their ends pointing to the north and the blades placed on the north and south sides should have their ends pointing to the other auspicious region, the east (see, e.g., also BhS. 1, 11, 2 f.; ĀpŚ. 6, 3, 5; *paristarāṇa*, ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 5; BhŚ. 1, 5, 1 etc. and compare, e.g., JG. 1, 1: 2, 4). Strewing the *darbha* with the tops turned towards the east one turns them godward (cf. ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 1) and makes the fire accessible to the gods who are believed to reside in the east (2, 1, 1, 2 etc.; 14, 2, 2, 28). On certain occasions, however, one has to deviate from this rule. At sacrifices to the Fathers the blades should be southward-pointed (ĀpG. 1, 14; BGPar. 2, 6, 8), that is towards their region. When a sacrificer has died whilst being in foreign parts the *adhvaryu* performs an *iṣṭi* (unbloody sacrifice) near his house, placing the *darbha* so as to have their ends pointing to the south (ĀpŚ. 9, 11, 8 describing this sacrifice in the chapter on expiatory rites; to the south-east BhŚ. 9, 15, 1): in this way the fires communicate with the region of the deceased Fathers (cf., e.g., ŚB. 9, 3, 4, 11; 13, 8, 1, 7), and in the south-east is the door to their world (ŚB. 13, 8, 1, 5). The balls of rice destined for the deceased ancestors at a *śrāddha* should be placed on blades of *darbha* with the ends pointing to the south (ViSm. 73, 17). In the section on the enclosing of the fire BGŚ. 1, 6, 2 the *darbha* stalks

142. Later texts make mention of, e.g., Śiva fires (burning *bilva* twigs, cowdung, *darbha* and so on: Śiva-Pur. Vidy. 18, 62 ff.).

143. C.G. Kashikar, *Sūtras of Bhāradvāja*, II, Poona 1964, p. 309 translates “blades of grass”; *śalākā* usually means “small stick, twig, thin piece of wood, shoot, sprout”.

144. For particulars see J.A.B. van Buitenen, *The pravargya*, Poona 1968, p. 125.

145. See p. 169.

are minutely described: the tops should not be cut or broken, they should not be cut with the nails (which are impure, ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 2), not be discoloured, not be diseased; their roots should not be burnt or scorched, they should be more than four fingers long. The suggestion of course is that the grass makes access and communication possible in the direction in which it has grown.

In deviation from the usual procedure the one who on the occasion of a *saltra* (a soma sacrifice lasting twelve days or longer) performs, in the country of the enemy (comm.), the rite described at Kauś. 22, 14 ff. in order to become prosperous should strew *darbha* round the *gārhapatya* fire, *pūlika* (a kind of fragrant grass, see, e.g., ŚB. 14, 1, 2, 12, also used Kauś. 25, 11; it may serve as a substitute for *soma*, PB. 9, 5, 3 ff.<sup>146</sup>; cf. 8, 4, 1) round the *dakṣiṇāgni* – no doubt because an apotropaeic power is ascribed to fragrant objects<sup>147</sup> – and hemp (used in magic<sup>148</sup>) round the *āhavanīya*. The same ritual action is performed at all three fires<sup>149</sup>.

In ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 1 the wooden sword is wiped off (cleansed) with *darbha*; the other *sūtras* of the Taittirīyas make mention of sharpening it by means of *trṇa* (BhŚ. 2, 1, 1), *barhis* (BŚ. 1, 11: 14, 6) and *darbha* (VaikhŚ. 4, 11: 50, 7). For the wiping off of the wooden ladle (*darvī*) see BG. 1, 3, 12.

In his description of the use of *darbha* blades the author of ĀpG. 2, 1 goes into details: the implement with which one sacrifices is warmed at the fire, wiped off with *darbha* blades, warmed again, sprinkled (with water), put down, and touched with the blades which thereupon are thrown into the fire. Likewise BG. 1, 3, 12. The warming<sup>150</sup> is here also a protective rite or perhaps also a means of coming into contact with the fire that is supposed to be a giver of vigour etc. (cf. PG. 2, 4, 8), the sprinkling purifies and consecrates, and the wiping off is a well-known eliminatory rite. Interestingly enough, the *darbha* that has been used for this purpose should be purified with water before being destroyed in the fire (see also BGŚ. 5, 1, 13). At an earlier moment other *darbha* blades which had been employed to purify the sacrificial butter three times are thrown into the fire without more ado (1, 22), obviously because they had not come into contact with objects that were or might be impure<sup>151</sup>. – The author of MG. 2, 2, 23 enjoins those concerned to put the stirring spoon and the *darbha* used in a *pākayajña* (offering of cooked food) to throw into the fire. One of the concluding actions of *śrauta* rites consists in the taking

146. And W. Caland's notes on these places, in *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Calcutta 1931, p. 213.

147. See J. Gonda, *The Savayajñas*, Amsterdam Acad. 1965, p. 396.

148. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 121.

149. In order to perform the rite of encircling the fire (*paristarāṇa*) the Pāñcarātra Viṣṇuite should pick up a *kūrca*, dip it in water that is intended for sprinkling and then sprinkle with the water that drips from it all around the fire pit and platform so as to make these a protected area. He also makes four looped bundles of *darbha* with which he forms a boundary on all four sides of the fire, laying the tops of the blades in a northerly direction. Three handfuls of grass are used for each of the points of the compass. The boundary is closed by spreading the bunch of *darbha* on the north side of the fireplace (Lakṣmī-Tantra, 40, 52 f., with notes by Sanjukta Gupta, Lakṣmī Tantra, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1972, p. 260; Jayākhya S. 15, 78; ViśvS. 11, 21).

150. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 66; 82; 170; 373; on the wiping off p. 324 f.

151. Staal, *Agni*, I, p. 686: "The last oblations of the animal sacrifices are butter oblations made from *darbha* grass dipped in the *dhruvā* ladle".

away of the *prastara*, the dropping of the *vidhr̥fi* on the *barhis* and so on, and the throwing of the *prastara* into the fire (MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 13 ff.; see also 2, 5, 5, 18 ff. etc.).

The author of TB. 3, 3, 2, 2 strongly dissuades those who wish to get rid of *darbhāḥ* that have been used in performing a sacrifice from throwing them away at random, for that would be drawing and using the power of the performance wrongly (*karmānah ... vidohāḥ*). If cattle should tread upon these stems, that would not be good for them because the stems would not be properly appeased.

When those who are engaged in renewing the sacred fires at a given moment proceed to establish the *gārhapatya* fire, they have first to throw the old blades of *darbha* into the fires (ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 9) and then to perform the establishment with the so-called stanzas of the queen of snakes (*sarparājñī*, TS. 1, 5, 4, 1; BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 14 ff.; BhŚ. 5, 19, 6; ĀpŚ. 1. cit.), viz. TS. 1, 5, 3, 1 ab, cf. BhŚ. 5, 7, 2; or TS. 1, 5, 3, 1 a–d, cf. ĀpŚ. 5, 12, 1. TS. 1, 5, 4, 1 informs us that when the serpents thought that they were growing worn out a certain Kasarṇāra – in AVŚ. 10, 4, 5; 17 Kaśarṇāra is a snake – beheld these mantras with the result that the serpents struck off their worn-out skins. “When one establishes the *gārhapatya* with these stanzas one renews it and establishes it as immortal”. The destruction of the old *darbha* runs parallel with the process of sloughing, making it manifest and contributing to the renewal of the *gārhapatya*.

Among the peculiarities of this ritualism is the identification of (grammatical) gender and (physiological) sex with the purpose to argue that the combination of two entities of different gender (e.g. ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 18 water (*āpah*, feminine) and fire (*agnī*, masculine)) enter into a sexual relation which is productive of offspring. When the *adhvaryu* throws the grass stems used for the cleansing of the spoons into the fire with a stanza in which he destroys the rival “with this thousand-sprouted one”, he effects on behalf of the patron such a copulation for the sake of procreation, because “stanza” (*ṛc*) is feminine and *darbha* is masculine (TB. 3, 3, 2, 2). Alternatively, he may throw the grass-stems on the *utkara* after having purified them with water, that is appeased the dangerous power in them, because the *utkara* is the firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*) of whatever belongs to the sacrificial performance with the exception of the oblations; then also the patron becomes firmly established with offspring and cattle (§ 3 f.; see also ĀpŚ. 2, 5, 1; MŚ. 1, 3, 5, 25; and compare AVŚ. 2, 7, 3). Anyhow, the *darbha* can in this respect be put on a par with deities such as Agni (ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 15) or Indra (the partner of Night or Dawn, 2, 3, 1, 37 f.), or an important phenomenon such as breath (the partner of the voice, 1, 4, 1, 2), the *vaśat* call (1, 7, 2, 11), but also with the *veda* (the broom made of grass) which is the partner of the *vedī* (feminine) and of the patron’s wife (1, 9, 2, 21 f.).

In BGŚ. 1, 7, 1 the *darbhāḥ* required for a sacrifice performed with a wooden ladle (*darvīhoma*) are exactly specified. They are, not fortuitously, 108 in number: 108 is, like other numbers ending in eight, auspicious<sup>152</sup>. There are 2 that are to be held in the hand (*hastapavitre*), 2 to form a seat, 16 to be strewn round the fire from the south-side, the tops being turned towards the east, 17 from the west, the tops being

152. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 38 f.



directed to the north, 18 from the north with tops turned towards the east (cf. ŚG. 1, 8, 1 ff.; HG. 1, 1, 11), 17 for the vessels, 5 and 17 for the seats of the *brahman* and *prañīta* water<sup>153</sup>, twice 2 *pavitras* for the butter, 2 for illuminating, 2 tops of *darbha*, 2 for carrying fire round, and 4 for wiping off the wooden ladles (*śrucaḥ*).

When the victim of an animal sacrifice has been strangled his body is cut open in order to pull out the internal deposit of fat<sup>154</sup>. Before proceeding to do so one puts a *darbha* blade – the blade with which the victim had been touched and brought near (MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 2\*f.) – with the mantra “O plant (*oṣadhe*), protect him”<sup>155</sup> (MŚ. 1, 8, 4, 7; ĀpŚ. 7, 18, 12) and then cuts obliquely on it with the butcher’s knife. The top of that blade is used at a later moment to catch the drops of fat (MŚ. 24; ĀpŚ. 7, 20, 1), when this is being roasted, obviously to prevent the fat from falling on or staining the ground. For a motivation see TS. 6, 3, 9, 5: because of the mantra “O Vāyu, (taste) of the drops” (MŚ. 1, 8, 4, 24)<sup>156</sup> the drops are produced separately. The *vapā* (fat) is the foremost (chief) part (*agram*) of cattle, the *barhis* (i.e. the *darbha*) the chief of plants; he causes the chief to be furnished abundantly with the chief and establishes the cattle firmly in the plants. A similar ritual is prescribed in Kauś. 44 to appease the evil produced by a barren cow (*vaśāśamanam*); see 44, 29 and 37 (cf. also 9; 11; 14).

The grass that is to protect against the risks of having a hair-cutting (cf., e.g., ĀpŚ. 10, 5, 8)<sup>157</sup> is often called *darbha*: ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 7 f.; BS. 2, 8: 45, 12 (three bunches of *darbha*)<sup>158</sup>; VaikhŚ. 12, 6: 136, 5 (cf. ĀpŚ. 10, 5, 8); GG. 2, 9, 4; 14 (*darbhapiñjūṭiḥ*); JG. 1, 11: 9, 7; KG. 40, 11; Kauś. 53, 20 (among the requisites (§ 2) are *darbha-prāntāni* “tips of *darbha*”). Likewise the grass used in the *śimantonnayana* rite<sup>159</sup>: PG. 1, 15, 4; GG. 2, 7, 5; ŚG. 1, 22, 8 (a *darbha* needle, *śūci*), KauśG. 1, 14, 7; Kauś. 79, 14. The author of BG. 1, 10, 7 requires for this rite a quill of a porcupine that is variegated in three places, three bunches of *darbha*, blossoms of the *udumbara* fig-tree and of barley, thus emphasizing the ideas of protection and fecundity. When the hair has been cut, the *adhvaryu* pours water on him and “purifies” him with three bunches of seven *darbha* stalks each (BS. 2, 8: 46, 4; ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 7 ff.). – The man who is to cut down a tree in order to obtain a sacrificial stake places a blade of young (fresh) *darbha* (*darbhataruṇaka*) between the axe and the tree (ŚB. 3, 6, 4, 10) – “so wird also der zauberische (I would prefer “potent and protective”) Grashalm zuerst vom Beil getroffen”<sup>160</sup>.

*Darbha* is one of the requisites of the *vaśāśamana*, the ritual method of appeasing the evil produced by a barren cow that appears to be pregnant and of the sacrifice of her foetus (Kauś. 43, 21–45, 19). It is, in order to protect the animal, strewn, in a circular movement in accordance with the tendency of the hair (cf. ŚB. 3, 1,

153. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 132.

154. The leaf or flare: T. Burrow, in BSOAS 45 (1982), p. 188.

155. For this mantra see TS. 1, 2, 1, 1; MS. 1, 2, 1: 9, 9; ĀpŚ. 7, 4, 2 etc.

156. Remember that Vāyu is the god of the morning air.

157. See p. 40 above.

158. For a (German) translation of this passage see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 69.

159. See p. 40 above.

160. Meyer, Trilogie, III, p. 94.

3, 9<sup>161</sup>) on the navel region (44, 29), before one uses the knife. At a later moment the foremost part of the *darbha* is thrown away.

In the mantras which are to accompany the falling of the hair of the king who is being shaved and its being placed on a bunch of *darbha* “made with energy” (*darbhastambe vīryakṛte*) (TB. 2, 7, 17, 2 f.) the wish is expressed that the king’s *varcas* (brilliant vital power and prestige) will not follow the hairs. (The brahmins, comm.) are said to have wished that the hair was placed in many ways and directions, between heaven and earth in the waters and in the sky and are requested to unite the king with manly strength (*paum̐sya*) and *varcas*. See also BGP. 1, 13, 26 (on a *darbhastamba* or on the root of an *udumbara*). Similarly, BŚ. 18, 19: 365, 13 prescribing the mantra “they have in many ways searched where they should deposit it (between heaven and earth ...)” – for which see HG. 2, 6, 13 (*cūḍākarma*, first cutting of the hair); BG. 2, 4, 15; MG. 1, 21, 10 etc. – with the implication that *darbha* is the best place to put it down. According to JG. 1, 11: 9, 15 the hair and the rests of the *darbha* are placed on bull’s dung – a means of purification – which is not put on the bare ground<sup>162</sup>. In the direction given at VaikhŚ. 12, 6: 136, 9 with regard to the hair of the sacrificer *darbha* and an *udumbara* are considered equivalent: the hair should be hidden at the roots of either of them.

A *darbhastamba* is also the place where the remnants of the offerings are put down<sup>163</sup>: BG. 3, 5, 18 (*vāstuśamana* ritual) with homage paid to Rudra, the god who at the end of a sacrifice is to be propitiated with something useless (cf. GGS. 1, 8, 28 where he receives the grass that is thrown into the fire); BGS. 4, 10, 8 (a rite performed for the householder who has two wives) with TB. 2, 8, 8, 8; TS. 5, 2, 7, 1 (AVŚ. 4, 1, 1 etc.) which in SVB. 1, 6, 4 is to be chanted by the man who has illicit connexions with the wife of a brahmin and which together with the other mantra prescribed here, viz. TB. 2, 8, 8, 9 *pitā virājām* “the father of the splendid ones”, is at TB. 3, 12, 1 used in the *divyaḥśyenī iṣṭi*<sup>164</sup>.

The name *darbha* is also employed when grass is a means of taking up butter, applying collyrium, or anointing oneself: BhŚ. 10, 4, 8; 13 (*śareṣika* “a stalk of *śara* reed or grass”, *darbheṣika* or *darbhapuñjila*); MŚ. 2, 1, 1, 35 (cf. MS. 3, 6, 2: 62, 1); ĀpŚ. 10, 6, 11; HŚ. 10, 1, 46; GG. 4, 3, 13 (the collyrium has at an earlier moment been smeared onto three *darbha* blades, 4, 2, 30); MG. 1, 11, 8 (*darbha* or *muñja*). Among the circumstances in which those concerned are enjoined to salve their eyes is the death of a guru; then the young women of the house should do so with young *darbha* which they should throw away after use whilst turning their faces away: unmistakably apotropaic measures involving interruption of contact (ĀpG. 4, 6, 11).

Sometimes an author says that the stalk should be one with a tuft (e.g. ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 3; VaikhŚ. 12, 7: 137, 11 *śara* or *darbha*; MŚ. 2, 1, 1, 38); just like the explicit mention of the instrument itself, the reference to the tuft is added with good reason:

161. That is, in the regular way or order (cf., e.g., PB. 22, 3, 3; 22, 10, 2).

162. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 92.

163. See p. 111.

164. See P.E. Dumont, in Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 95 (1951), p. 658 f.

a stalk with a tuft is a means of chasing away the evil spirits (*satūlā bhavati virakṣas-tāyai*, ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 13): no doubt because it was common usage to chase away insects with such a stalk.

In some chapters dealing with the preparation of the *vedi* (BhŚ. 2, 1, 4 ff.: ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 4 ff.; TB. 3, 2, 9, 2 ff.; KŚ. 2, 6, 14 ff.; ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 8 ff.) a circumstantial account is given of a ceremony called *stambayajus*. The name (lit. “*yajus* formula relating to a (particular) clump of grass”) designates also the grass-bush itself. The *adhvaryu* “takes the *stambayajus* away from” (i.e. performs this ceremony from) the eastern part of the *vedi* (BhŚ. 5; ĀpŚ. 4<sup>165</sup>). Proceeding to do so he should first with the mantra “thou art a defensive armour (*varma*) for the earth” (ĀpŚ.; KŚ. 2, 6, 15) place within the *vedi* a blade of *darbha* with its top either towards the north or towards the east and strike upon it by means of the wooden sword with the mantra “O earth that worshippest the gods, I will not harm the root of thy plant” (TS. 1, 1, 9 d). So far there can be no doubt that the *darbha* has here also a protective function<sup>166</sup>. Then the *adhvaryu* takes up the loose earth that has been dug up by the sword together with (that part of) the grass (that has been struck off) and throws it away on the place where the *utkara* (the heap of rubbish) is to be made (BhŚ. 10). This action is performed four times, the last time without a mantra and with the *darbha* alone, the remains of which are thrown away. As appears from the name of this ceremony, the grass and the mantras are considered to be of special importance. From the mantras recited it appears that this flinging away of a grass-bush accompanied by *yajus* formulae is essentially identical with the expulsion of the *asuras* (see also ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 12). The officiant impersonating Agni shuts the *asuras* – in the formulae represented by one of them (TB. 5; ŚB. 17), called Araru (who is the rival, *bhrātrvyaḥ*, of the sacrificer, TB. 5) – and those who have evil designs on the sacrificer (ŚB. 13 f.) in from here and puts them down. By performing this rite three times the officiant drives the enemy (rival) of the sacrificer away from the earth, the intermediate space, and heaven (TB. 5 f.). The fourth time he drives him away from what is indefinite (unlimited, *aparimīta*, TB. 6) or from a fourth world of uncertain existence (ŚB. 21) and that is why then no mantra is recited, for “uncertain also is what (is done) silently” (cf. ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 2). So the conclusion may be that what is thrown away and consigned to the rubbish-heap, that is the dust and the severed parts of the grass, represents the demoniac power of which one wishes to get rid.

What is the function and significance of the bunch of *darbha* in TS. 6, 2, 4, 3? When a boar kept the wealth of the *asuras* on the other side of seven hills, Indra, plucking a bunch of *darbha* and piercing through these hills (see RV. 1, 61, 7), slew him. Thereupon Viṣṇu, the sacrifice, carried the boar off to the gods who in this way won the wealth of the *asuras*. Since the text does not state that Indra slew the boar with the grass and MŚ. 3, 8, 3, not mentioning the *darbha*, explicitly says that Indra aimed his *drumbhūli*, a bow or some similar weapon, and, by implication, an

165. See the notes by Caland, Śraut. Āp. I, p. 48, and Kashikar, Sūtra of Bharadvāja, I, p. 35. Compare also Staal, Agni, I, p. 381.

166. See also p. 80; 82 etc.

arrow, at the boar and in the version preserved in KS. 25, 2: 104, 3 the god threw his *ḍālbhūṣī* towards him, there is no great chance that in this mythical narrative Indra transformed this bunch of grass into a weapon<sup>167</sup>. However, if the *darbhapuñjīla* in TS. were no more than “a simple solution of a difficult text”<sup>168</sup>, the author could hardly have inserted this guess without attaching some significance to it. So the function of the *darbha* may have been either protective or magical.

At the end of the third pressing (*agniṣṭoma*) BŚ. 8, 15: 256, 15 enjoins those concerned to fill the vessels used for drinking the *soma* with water, to arrange them on the left (north) side of the *āhavanīya*, and to throw into them knots of *ḍūrṅā* grass, three at a time and (the stalks of a) *darbhapuñjīla*, one by one. This is Baudhāyana’s rule, but Śālīki, in an unclear note (21, 24: 112, 13), states that this rite should be performed (only?) with water. Thereupon the formula “the *uktha* (-*śastra*) has been recited for Indra” is to be pronounced (cf. ŚŚ. 8, 16, 3; 8, 17, 3). Somewhat similar rites are prescribed by other authorities: ŚB. 4, 4, 5, 2 f.; ĀpŚ. 13, 18, 7. The purpose of this rite probably is to signify the end of the pressing ritual: one gets rid of the knots which have prevented the sacrifice from becoming a failure – cf. ŚB. 3, 5, 3, 25 and 3, 6, 1, 25: “he makes a knot, “lest it should fall asunder”; he undoes the same (knot) when the work is completed”; Kauś. 19, 12 f. – and of the *darbha* which has fulfilled a protective function.

The man who wishes to perform the non-Vedic *gajaśānti* (appeasement of evil and danger threatening his elephant(s)) described in BGŚ. 1, 20 should adorn (*alamṅkṛtya*, with the implication “strengthen, fortify, make defensible, protect”<sup>169</sup>) the enclosure for the elephant with garlands of *darbha* and the elephant should smell the odour of the offering (§ 2). Garlands are used for protective and purificatory purposes, for promoting prosperity, in consecrating a house and so on<sup>170</sup>. Smelling or inhaling the smoke of a burnt-offering etc. is a form of contact.

As to the direction to study the Veda whilst holding *darbha* in the hand see VāG. 5, 25: the teacher, initiating the pupil and going to recite the *sāvitrī* etc. bends his right knee<sup>171</sup> and brings his hands which hold *darbha* together; MG. 1, 4, 5: “(the student) recites the *sāvitrī* stanza (RV. 3, 62, 10) three times and three chapters ... holding *darbha*-grass in his hand”; likewise 1, 4, 9; 1, 5, 3; VāG. 8, 5; KG. 9, 4, where Brāhmaṇadatta’s note reads as follows: “(the teacher) sits down, together with his pupils, on *darbha* grasses, the tops of which are turned eastward holding *darbha* in his hand, and recites three times the *sāvitrī* ... Then (having arrived at) the bank of a river he makes on a pure spot 20 seats (*viṣṭara*) of *darbha*, places them

167. Unless one would rely on H.W. Bailey’s doubtful etymology (supposing both words to be related to *darbha*, Trans. Phil. Soc. London 1955, p. 76 ff.). For other etymologies see F.B.J. Kuiper, An Austro-asiatic myth, Amsterdam Acad. 1950; T. Burrow, in Bull. School Or. and Afr. St. 38 (1975), p. 61 f.

168. Bailey, op. cit., p. 78.

169. For *alamṅkṛ-* etc. see J. Gonda, in Eastern and Indian studies in honour of F.W. Thomas (Indian Antiquary, extra series, I), Bombay 1939, p. 97 ff. (= Selected Studies, II, p. 257 ff.).

170. See, e.g., L. Deubner, in Archiv f. Rel. Wiss. 30, p. 70 ff. – For a Hinduist instance of a sacrificial pavillion “adorned” (*alamṅkṛtam*) with garlands of *darbha* and flowers see Mayamata, 18, 176.

171. For this expression of respect, submissiveness and devotion to a ritual duty see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 61.

with their tops turned eastward, from south to north, and pays on these homage to 20 deities". Also JG. 2, 8 (holding the grass in the right hand). See also BG. 3, 4, 35; BGPar. 1, 8, 6; BGŚ. 1, 10, 4.

It would seem that, just as in the post-Vedic period, then already one of the most essential functions of this *darbha* was to protect the person engaged in recitation etc. against evil influences and to preserve his ritual purity. ViSm. 73, 25 enjoins the man who is celebrating a *śrāddha* ceremony<sup>172</sup> to sprinkle the food left by the brahmins and the grass (*trṇa*), to strew the scattered food to the leavings, to offer, at the end of the ceremony, water to the brahmins, to sprinkle the place where the *śrāddha* has been performed whilst holding *darbha* in his hand (*darbhapāṇiḥ*), no doubt to render the contact with the dead and the possible unwished for influence exerted by the ceremony ineffectual. The person who, whilst performing the *āśvayuja* ceremony, gives a *bali* offering and flowers should be *darbhapavitrapāṇiḥ* (AVPar. 18, 1, 10). The same meaning is conveyed by *sapavitraiḥ pāṇibhiḥ* (HG. 2, 18, 9): when the teacher and his pupils bathe they hold "purifiers" (of *darbha*) in their hands (the ceremonious conclusion of the annual course of study). On the occasion of a *puṇyāha* ceremony one should be ritually pure, wear white clothes etc. as well as be *pavitrapāṇiḥ* (ĀgnG. 2, 3, 3: 56, 18)<sup>173</sup>. – If one wishes to substitute chanting *sāmans* for performing sacrifices one should spread *darbha*, sit down on it, grasp *darbha* with one's right hand and chant definite *sāmans* nine times (SVB. 1, 3).

In a section on the resumption of the study (recitation) of the sacred texts ŚG. 6, 2, 11 prescribes an expiation (*śānti*); in case the vessel to be used for this purpose is damaged, sprinkled water may serve (*prāyaścitti*), but the person sprinkling should hold gold or a *darbhapiṅḡala* in his hand. Gold is very auspicious and often used as an amulet or talisman<sup>174</sup>. – According to VG. 5, 25 one has to bend one's right knee and place one's open hands which hold *darbha* side by side before saying the sacred syllable *om*.

In TB. 1, 4, 4, 1 the grass with which gold is fastened is *darbha*. When the sun sets upon the *āhavanīya* hearth before the fire has been brought to its place, a very learned brahmin must bring it while gold (representing the sun<sup>175</sup>) is conveyed in front by means of *darbhāḥ* (ĀśvŚ. 3, 12, 16). In ŚB. 2, 9, 2 gold is with a *darbha* stalk

172. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 441 ff.

173. On Hinduist use of a *pavitra* see, e.g., Lakṣmī-Tantra, 36, 136 (where it is a tuft of *darbha* with three blades bunched together with two loops). For the continued existence of these customs in modern times see, e.g., C.G. Diehl, Instrument and purpose, Lund 1956, p. 124 (the one who is to draw lines on the ground for the *sthaṅḍila* takes *darbha* in his hand), and Brunner-Lachaux, Somaśambhupaddhati, II, p. VIII f. – For the putting on of a ring of *darbha* worn on the third finger of the right hand (whilst facing east or north) on religious occasions, for instance when praying, making a vow, addressing a god, controlling one's vital forces by regulating the breath, taking sacrificed food (*prasāda*), going on pilgrimage or being otherwise engaged in any ceremony or ritual performance see Diehl, op. cit., passim. The *pūcāri* (officiant in smaller shrines) is by tying the *kāppu* (the corresponding Tamil term) "in duty bound to perform the ritual" (Diehl, op. cit., p. 252); at the same time he is "protected from evil spirits" (H. Whitehead, The village gods of South India, Madras 1921, p. 100).

174. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 140 f. etc.

175. See p. 22 f. above. Cf. also BŚ. 6, 12: 169, 11.



fastened to a spoon<sup>176</sup>. In MŚ. 2, 5, 3, 7 the laud is initiated with two blades and gold<sup>177</sup>. – *Darbha* and gold are put on the head of a youth for whose hair or beard are shaven (*godāna*, KG. 44, 3).

Performing the soma ritual the *adhvaryu* should at a given moment tie a piece of gold to a blade of *darbha* with a knot that can easily be untied and put it in the butter which is to be offered (BhŚ. 10, 14, 18; ĀpŚ. 10, 22, 1; VaikhŚ. 12, 16: 146, 8; cf. BŚ. 6, 12: 169, 2 mentioning a thread (*sūtra*) and adding “having connected it with a *darbhanāḍī*”). This rite is explained in TS. 6, 1, 7, 1: because the officiant places gold in the ghee offspring is born with bones through that which is boneless; “if he were to place the gold without fastening it on, the foetuses of the offspring would be liable to miscarriage”. Although, intelligibly enough, this author did not pay attention to the *darbha*, the *sūtrakāras* obviously did not wish it to be replaced by other material. After having wound the *darbhanāḍī* round the handle of the *sruc* (a large wooden ladle) he sacrifices in the *āhavanīya* (BŚ.).

Gold weighing a hundred is tied to a *darbhanāḍī* (a “tubular stalk of *darbha*”, BŚ. 12, 9: 98, 12; 15), when the royal sacrificer who has the *rājasūya* performed is to be prepared for the unction. The officiant places it in a vessel filled with the water of the consecration in order to purify this with the piece of gold. Compare the mantra (TS. 1, 8, 12 d “the pure I purify with the pure”) and TB. 1, 7, 6, 2: the gold weighs a hundred in order to establish the sacrificer firmly in a complete term of life of 100 years etc. and 3 “gold is *amṛtam*”. Compare also ŚB. 5, 3, 5, 15.

When the *Agni*-ground is measured (*agnicayana*) a piece of gold is put on a bundle of *darbha* in its middle; one offers on it (MŚ. 6, 1, 5, 33). – See also HG. 1, 10, 6 ff.

Mention is also made of a *sākhāpavitra* “an instrument of purification fastened to a branch” (BhŚ. 1, 11, 11; ĀpŚ. 1, 11, 5; 1, 12, 3; 1, 14, 6). This consists of threefold *darbha* that is fastened to a branch of the *palāśa* – which of course represents the power of that tree – and measures a span; it is used as a purifying strainer (TB. 3, 7, 4, 11; cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 9).

The name *darbha* did not hinder the performers of rites from using the grass as a means of consecrating or transferring energy<sup>178</sup>. The oblations and the objects to be used in the rites that are described in the *Kauśikasūtra* (see *Kauś.* 7, 3 and 16) are offered or consecrated according to the rule given in 7, 21: the patron who has the rite performed touches the performer (officiant) from behind with some blades of *darbha* (comm.) so as to attract the sacred power with which the latter is in contact with the result that the rite takes place on behalf of himself, that is, of the one who touches the performer<sup>179</sup>. This belief is even more intelligible than the conviction of those who think that magic power operates also from a distance like the throwing of a spear<sup>180</sup>. Another instance is recorded at *Kauś.* 44, 12: when the bar-

176. See p. 22 above.

177. See p. 46 above.

178. See p. 44 f.

179. I refer to Caland, *Zauberritual*, p. 12, n. 13; Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 85; see also F. Heiler, *Das Gebet*, <sup>3</sup>München 1923, p. 103.

180. Cf. Wagenvoort, *Roman dynamism*, p. 136; 198 f.

ren cow, the victim in the *vasāsamana* rite, has been brought to the place of immolation one touches her from behind (*anvārabhate*) with the two blades of *darbha* with which she has been sprinkled.

When the husband is performing the ceremony on the occasion of the first symptoms of his wife's pregnancy (*garbhādhāna*), he has, *inter alia*, to strike her body three times from the navel upwards by means of a stalk of *darbha*. In one of the two mantras that accompany this action he says "with these ten fingers I touch you that you may give birth to a son" (VaikhG. 3, 10; see HG. 2, 2, 5). Here the *darbha* appears to be a means of transferring the wish of (in this case) the husband to the powers presiding over the pregnancy or of influencing the processes that are taking place in the body of his wife. – Compare Kauś. 33, 13 enjoining to put a particular root wrapped in *darbha* into the hair of a pregnant woman (with AVŚ. 1, 11) in order to ensure a safe delivery<sup>181</sup>.

BG. 1, 1, 23 and ĀpG. 4, 5 describe the following wedding rite. When the bridegroom has beheld the bride, he should seize, with his thumb and fourth finger, a blade of *darbha* and wipe with it the interstice between her eyebrows with the mantra "here I expel (*nirdīśāmi*)<sup>182</sup> the husband-killing bad luck which is in you". It may be interesting to remember that, according to the Hinduist yogic doctrine concerning the structure of the subtle body, between the brows is the so-called centre of command (*ājñācakra*), which owes its name to the fact that here the orders are received which emanate from the guru. The deity of this centre is the Supreme Lord (Śiva Maheśvara); he who meditates on it sees all the results of his actions destroyed; if he meditates on it at the time of death, he dissolves into the Supreme Self<sup>183</sup>. In any case, the *darbha* is supposed to transmit the order expressed by means of the mantra. After the above action the bridegroom should throw the *darbha* away towards the west (the region of hope or expectation<sup>184</sup>; ĀpG.), touch water and take the bride by the right hand saying "you are Mitra (a friend)" (BG., TS. 1, 8, 16 a)<sup>185</sup>.

In a rite for the benefit of a person who, though qualified to obtain food, has no food *darbha* is used in an attempt to elicit favourable prognostics (PB. 21, 3, 3 ff.). That person should during twelve days drink only hot milk and lie on the bare ground, then at daybreak of the thirteenth day perform the sacrifice to Śabalī (see § 7), beseeching her to give food and so on and thereupon go to a place outside the village, take hold of a bunch of *darbha* and three times call "Śabalī". If any

181. E.E. Evans-Pritchard, *Witchcraft, oracles, and magic among the Azande*, Oxford 1937, p. 449 f. informs us that to promote the growth of their melons these Sudanese make use of a certain kind of tall grass called *bingha*, which grows luxuriantly on cultivated land. They throw the grass like a dart, say "you are melons, be very fruitful like the *bingha*" and transfix the leaves of the melons.

182. Cf. J. Gonda, *Deiknumi*, Thesis Utrecht, Amsterdam 1929, p. 184.

183. Śiva-Samhitā 5, 122 ff.; see, e.g., A. Danielou, *Yoga*, London 1949, p. 132; M. Eliade, *Le yoga*, Paris 1954, p. 245. – That in a woman eye-brows which meet bring ill-luck is a widespread belief (see J.J. Meyer, *Sexual life in ancient India*, London 1930, p. 434, n. 1, with many references; Th. Zachariae, *Kleine Schriften*, Bonn and Leipzig 1920, p. 361, n. 2). This may also have been one of the reasons why the bridegroom had to touch the girl on that critical place.

184. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 55.

185. For AiB. 7, 33, 1 see p. 89 f. below.

animal other than a dog or an ass responds, this is lucky. This description reminds us of an *augurium impetrativum* of the ancient Romans, a sign of the will of the gods deliberately observed and regarded as proof of their favour, in answer to a request. Among these signs were sounds uttered by animals. In India and in Rome these animals were portentous beings regarded as active agents of the augury. In Rome, the time for observing them was, as a rule, between midnight and dawn. The diviner (*augur*) had, after prayer and sacrifice, to mark out a consecrated space, e.g., on a hill. An *augurium* was considered to be an *incrementum*, an increase of strength: cf. Verg. Aen. 3, 89 (Aeneas, after having reverently entered a temple, praying to Apollo) *da, pater, augurium atque animis illabere nostris* ("... enter into our minds")<sup>185</sup>. In view of the resemblance on these points between the Roman and the Indian rites it may be asked, if there existed some counterpart of the bunch of *darbha* in other countries which could elucidate the function of that object. Now, diviners, interpreters of signs and other priestly or non-priestly functionaries of this category are not infrequently in possession of a staff. This object is often more than a mere insignia of their office, because just as their official garb etc. it is believed to add to their power. Being part of a living tree and participating in its specific power the staff is thought to transmit energy by means of contact and to fortify its possessor with a view to a successful fulfilment of his duties. The staff of the Celtic seer was believed to be a means of discovering the unknown<sup>187</sup>. The Roman *augures* bore a crooked staff without a knob, the *lituus* (Livius, 1, 18, 7). The bunch of *darbha* seems to have had a similar function<sup>188</sup>.

A remarkable rite with two young shoots of *darbha* occurs in a long argument on the proper food – viz. the fruits of the *nyagrodha*, *udumbara*, *aśvattha* and *plakṣa* trees – of the king instead of *soma* (AiB. 7, 33). When during the sacrifice the goblets are filled, the officiant should also fill up the goblet of the royal patron in which two such shoots (*darbhalaruṇake*) should have been thrown (*prāste syātam*). When the *vaṣaṭ* call has been uttered (by the *hotar*) – after which the *adhvaryu* has to pour out the oblation into the fire – the latter should with the stanza ṚV. 4, 39, 6 throw the first of them within the enclosure of the *āhavanīya* fire<sup>189</sup>. In this oft quoted stanza the heroic horse Dadhikrāvan is eulogized as victorious and as a bearer of (re)creative power and vigour (*vājīn*) and requested to give the person speaking a fragrant mouth and length of days. This stanza – called “the fragrant” – is elsewhere used as a purifier after foul language or regarded as purificatory (e.g. ŚB. 13, 2, 9, 9; ŚG. 4, 5, 10 and see TS. 2, 2, 5, 1)<sup>190</sup>. This may be its function here also; notice

186. A. Bouché-Leclercq, Histoire de la divination, Paris, IV, p. 180 ff.; 209 ff.; G. Wissowa, Religion und Kultus der Römer, 2München 1912, p. 523 ff.; E. Flinck, Auguralia und Verwandtes, Helsinki Acad. 11 (1921), 10; F. Muller, Augustus, Amsterdam Acad. 1927, p. 40.

187. See, e.g., E.O. James, Staff, in J. Hastings, Encycl. of Rel. and Ethics, London 1908-1926 (1951), 11, p. 811 ff.; F. Heiler, Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion, Stuttgart 1961, p. 98 f.

188. For “magic strings and necklaces” in Indian literature see Tawney-Penzer, The Ocean of story, VI, p. 59 ff.

189. Thus it is not excluded from the sacrifice (cf. ŚB. 4, 4, 3, 12).

190. For details see J. Gonda, The mantras of the agnyupasthāna and the sautrāmaṇī, Amsterdam Acad. 1980, p. 20, and especially, Hymns of the Rgveda not employed in the solemn ritual, Amsterdam Acad. 1978, p. 100 ff.

that the verb, an aorist “I have praised”, points to the recent actual past. The much less often quoted stanza RV. 4, 38, 10 – in TS. 1, 5, 11, 4 (cf. 2, 2, 5, 1) it follows 4, 39, 6 – states that the horse has overspread (and is still overspreading, perfect tense) the five peoples, expresses the hope that he may be a conquering bearer of *vāja* and asks him to fill the eulogist’s words with honey. It accompanies the throwing away of the second *darbha* shoot after the second *vaṣaṭ* call has been uttered. In AiB. 7, 33, 5 it is stated that this drink from the trees has been auspiciously consumed and that the king’s sway will be unassailable. One should not exclude the possibility of a temporary “identification” of the *darbha* and Dadhikrāvan (notice the alliteration)<sup>191</sup>. The throwing away of the shoots is, I suppose, a method of transmitting the content of the prayers to the sacred area into which they are thrown and of bringing about contact with the divine powers.

It would appear that the same or a similar function is fulfilled by the blade of *darbha* – one of the two which, together with a green *plakṣa* branch with leaves, have been the instruments with which the he-goat (the victim) has been brought near – that is thrown down south-west of the *sāmitra* fire (the fire of the *sāmitar*, the one who slaughters the animal) with the mantra “be united with its (the offering’s) body; extending more broadly place the lord of the sacrifice (i.e. the patron) in the broad sacrifice” or, rather “... lead the lord of the sacrificer on to a broader (loftier) sacrifice” (for the mantra TS. 1, 3, 8 k; VS. 6, 11)<sup>192</sup>. The *sāmitar* then “appeases” (i.e. strangles) the victim on that blade (MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 29 f.; see also Kauś. 44, 14).

One of the characteristic features of the ceremonious conclusion of the annual course of study (*utsarga, visarjana*) is the custom mentioned in HG. 2, 18, 9 and BG. 3, 9, 1 ff. (see also BhG. 3, 9): after having bathed together the teacher and his pupils give (*saṃpradāya*, BG.) each other *darbha* blades. More exactly, HG. says that they, offering these blades to each other, as it were wish to give (them to) each other (*darbhān anyonyasmai saṃprayacchanto ditsanta ivānyonyam*); the comm. explains: “to give to each other” (*anyonyam prati*), mentioning also another reading “taking as it were” (*āditsanta iva*), i.e. “taking (the *darbha* blades) away from each other”<sup>193</sup>. These gifts are far removed from the economic and at first sight wholly ceremonial<sup>194</sup>. But they are no doubt not worthless, useless, or meaningless. With many ancient peoples to give meant to place oneself in relation to another person by an object which is believed to be or represent a part of one’s own self with the intention of forging a bond. The accepted gift binds, expresses and validates a social relation-

191. In ĀpŚ. 4, 14, 1 RV. 4, 39, 6 accompanies the drinking of sour milk (*dadhi*).

192. I refer to Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 44, n. 4. The passages ŚB. 3, 8, 1, 13 etc. are not identical.

193. One should take *anyonyam* to be an adverb (“mutually”). Oldenberg, The Grihya-sūtras, II (S.B.E. 30), p. 243 translated the last words “... feigning to try to seize (??) each other”, which cannot be the meaning of these words.

194. M. Mauss, Essai sur le don, forme archaïque de l’échange, Année sociologique, N.S. 1 (1925) (= The gift, London 1954); B. Malinowski, Argonauts of the Western Pacific, London 1922, passim; P. Tournier, The meaning of gifts, 1963; J. Gonda, ‘Gifts’ and ‘giving’ in the Rgveda, Vishv. Indol. Journal 2 (1964), p. 9 ff. (= Selected Studies, IV, p. 122 ff.).

ship; the receiver unites himself to the giver. Refusal to receive or bestow a gift often amounts to a declaration of a hostile disposition. Since giving not infrequently demands a gift in return friendship is often characterized by a repeated interchange of gifts. But why should the teacher and his pupils give to each other the same gifts and why should they give just blades of *darbha*, which, it is true, are, as is often the case, not directly consumable and no media of exchange outside the ceremonial system? Does the equality of the objects given point to perfectly mutual affection? Is the interchange of the power-laden grass a form of mutual exchange of the power that is conveyed or represented by the plant, an offer of mutual support, assistance, protection? And is the variant form of the custom handed down in HG. a sort of unpretentious dramatic action which as a substitute for the real act is intended either to prefigure the mutual transference of useful energy or to create the impression that the action is at the same time performed and not performed?<sup>195</sup>

For all I know a compound *darbhodaka* does not occur beside *kuśodaka*. I can mention only one instance of grass called *darbha* that is soaked in water<sup>196</sup>. In case one of the consecrated sacrificers of a *soma* ceremony falls ill, one should perform a special rite to appease the evil (ĀpŚ. 14, 20, 8). Among the requirements is a vessel filled with water – remember that the Aśvins, the physicians of the gods, deposited their skill in Agni, the waters, and Brahman (KS. 27, 41: 143, 15; TS. 6, 4, 9, 2); in this water one puts 21<sup>197</sup> barley-corns and several *darbhāḥ*. This water is with a suitable mantra requested to restore the patient's health. See also MS. 4, 8, 7: 115, 5 (*darbhapiñjūlāni*); MŚ. 3, 8, 3; VaikhŚ. 21, 6: 326, 7<sup>198</sup>.

A remarkable rite with many parallels in other countries<sup>199</sup> is handed down in connexion with the returning home of those who have attended a cremation and are therefore supposed to have contracted some magic evil. When they are on their way, without looking at the funeral pile and other persons, they are brought to a standstill and made to pass under a thorny branch (GautPit. 1, 4, 4 ff.), or under two branches of the *palāśa* (BaudhPit. 3, 4, 16) or also under a rope of *darbha* grass (VaikhG. 5, 6: 78, 16<sup>200</sup>). The same rite is recorded in BhPit. 1, 8, 1 f. and ĀpŚ. 31, 2, 36: to the west of three pits in which the relatives of the deceased person have to sit down one puts two branches of the *palāśa* or the *samī* in the ground and ties their tops together with *darbha*. Then these persons have to go on between these branches, while the *adhvaryu* mutters the mantra TĀ. 6, 3, 11, the grammatical subject of which is purified with the sieve of Savitar that is stretched in the air and by means of which Indra was cured of his disease. See also ĀpŚ. 31, 3, 13 (and

195. It may be worth recalling that every time when Roman officials had to take an oath they should have with them some herbage (*verbena*, Livius, 30, 43, 9).

196. But remember VaitS. 5, 10 mentioned above. See, e.g., also ŚivaPur., Vidy. 18, 110; *ibid.* Rudra 3, 47, 50 (rice grains mixed with curd and *darbha* water).

197. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 40 f.

198. In post-Vedic literature mention is made of drinking a drop of water by means of the tip of a *darbha* stalk once in a month, e.g. LiPur. 89, 19.

199. J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, London <sup>2</sup>1900, III, p. 399 ff.; <sup>3</sup>XI, p. 168 ff.; Hastings, E.R.E. X, p. 96; Th. Zachariae, *Kleine Schriften*, Bonn and Leipzig 1920, p. 293 ff.

200. See Caland, *Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*, p. 74.



31, 1, 40). Although the sieve is the sun<sup>201</sup>, or rather its rays, the metaphorical application of this word to the branches and the grass as well as the purificatory or propitiatory and protective function of the latter are clear<sup>202</sup>.

VaikhG. 5, 6: 78, 15 relates one of those well-known popular customs that are characterized by barring the way, but being a religious rite the object used to make the obstruction visible and effective should be a cord or rope of *darbha* (*darbharajju*). When those who have been present at a cremation return home, not looking backwards, turning their face downwards, one of them should on a solitary place stretch such a rope and with the mantra "do not descend" prevent the others from continuing their way. The others, pronouncing the mantra "we shall not descend again", pass "under the *tulī*" (which here seems to be synonymous with *rajju*, although *tulī*, *turī* etc. usually mean a "weaver's brush"; or was such an object fastened to the rope?). Then the one who has stretched the rope throws it away and the others following (him? or those who have already passed by?) continue their way. The author adds a brief description of a similar custom in which a branch (see 5, 2) is required to obstruct the passage.

Occasionally, an authority prescribes the use of a heavy or large handful (*guru-muṣṭi*, *grumuṣṭi*<sup>203</sup> of *darbha*<sup>204</sup>, which, in the opinion of the author of TS. 5, 4, 5, 2 is connected with or belongs to Prajāpati, probably because such a handful is somehow associated with completeness or totality which is homologized to Prajāpati. In TS., 1.c. and ĀpŚ. 17, 13, 6 and VārŚ. 2, 2, 3, 23 one anoints or sprinkles with curds mixed with honey by means of such a handful of *darbha* (*agnicayana*). In ĀpG. 20, 11 the bull of the *śulagava* sacrifice is sprinkled with it. See also MS. 3, 3, 6: 39, 11; HŚ. 12, 4, 8 (and ĀpŚ. 16, 21, 3; cf. ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 2 f.); BŚ. 10, 50: 52, 2; 14<sup>205</sup>.

It cannot have escaped the readers of the chapters on *kuśa* and *darbha* that the blades or stalks of these grasses are often used or prescribed in pairs. The name *pavitra* is not infrequently applied to a pair of such objects in their purificatory function<sup>206</sup>. Thus, e.g. in JG. 1, 2, one takes two stalks to be "purifiers" (*pavitre*), cuts them, consecrates them with "ye are purifiers, sacred to Viṣṇu", holds them above a vessel and pours the ghee in it through them. When the priest prepares propitiatory water, he dips two blades of *kuśa* in it (BGŚ. 1, 14). The victim to be immolated on the occasion of an animal sacrifice is touched, brought near and dedicated by two blades of *darbha* (e.g. MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 3; BhŚ. 7, 9, 8; 11)<sup>207</sup>. The barren cow (*vasā*)

201. See Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 160 (§ 130, n. 5) and especially ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 22.

202. For the bullocks of a modern village passing in procession under a sacred rope made of twisted grass see W. Crooke, Religion and folklore of Northern India, Oxford 1926, II, p. 298.

203. BŚ. 9, 13: 283, 16; 9, 16: 289, 2; 10, 50: 51, 15; 52, 2; 14. On this form see J. Wackernagel, Altind. Grammatik, I, Göttingen 1896, p. 23; A. Debrunner, Nachträge zu Band I, Göttingen 1957, p. 15.

204. Not *darbhamuṣṭi* (e.g. BG. 3, 5, 19 and BGŚ. 4, 20, 9).

205. VaikhŚ. 18, 16: 269, 11 mentions a "handful of tops of *darbha*" (*darbhāgramuṣṭi*) used as a means of sprinkling sacrificial butter; see also 19, 6: 293, 8.

206. I refer to Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 114 and the relevant sections of this publication.

207. However, ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 7 makes mention of the opinion of "some authorities" – the Vājasaneyins (ŚB. 3, 7, 3, 8) – that one blade is required; but see below. ĀpŚ. 6, 15, 5 gives his readers the

that appears to be pregnant is to be struck and taken hold of with two stalks of *darbha* (Kauś. 44, 10; 12; cf. 14). When those concerned are walking to the place of the *bahiṣpavamāna* the *adhvaryu* takes a pair of grass blades (*trṇe*) from the *vedi* (KŚ. 9, 6, 32). Two cords of *darbha* are wrapped around the sacrificial post (MŚ. 1, 8, 2, 23). The preparation of the sacrificial butter requires two tops of *darbha* blades (*darbhāgre*) which are thrown into it (BG. 1, 3, 11). One might also invite attention to the following custom. When a horse chariot and horses are given as a *dakṣiṇā* the receiver should sweep the mouths of these animals clean with a handful (*muṣṭi*) of *darbha*, addressing each single horse with two horse-names (LŚ. 2, 7, 20; DŚ. 5, 3, 23); PB. 1, 7, 1 enumerates eight such names for four horses (comm.).

The explanation of – or at least, information on – this unmistakable preference for pairs of grass-stalks is sometimes suggested by the texts themselves. Says the author of TS. 5, 2, 8, 3: “Animals do not like want of grass; (that is why) he puts down a brick of *dūrvā* grass, to support the animals, with two (stanzas, mantras) in order to create a firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhityai*)”. Similarly, 5, 4, 5, 3 “he anoints with a large handful (of grass), ... with two (stanzas), *pratiṣṭhityai*”. And see especially TB. 3, 2, 5, 1: the *adhvaryu* purifies the sprinkling water with two blades of *darbha*, (because) “the patron of the sacrifice is two-footed; it is in order to create a firm foundation”. According to ŚB. 3, 7, 3, 8 (KŚ. 6, 3, 19) (see above) one should drive up the animal victim after having taken one blade of grass or straw (*trṇa*), thinking “having a companion, I will secure it”, “for”, the author explains, “he who has a companion (lit. “... a second one”, *duṣṭiyavān*) is energetic (*vīryavān*)”. That the double form or nature of a sacral object “serves for prosperity” is explicitly stated at TS. 2, 1, 9, 3: “The sacrificial post is bifurcate (*viśākha*), for there are two deities (Varuṇa and Mitra); verily this serves for prosperity (*samṛddhyai*)”<sup>208</sup>. The double performance of a rite automatically duplicates its results. The author of KB. 20, 1 (20, 1, 17 ff.) states that three definite sacrificial rites should be performed twice in order to obtain a double possibility of eating food, a double portion of wild and domesticated animals, of plants and trees and of what moves in the waters and swims. Certain hymns of praise (*stoma*) are twofold, viz. the even ones and the odd ones (JB. 2, 81); the author continues: “The twofold (*ubhaye*, being of both kinds) *stomas* are a divine procreative pair (*daivyaṃ mithunaṃ prajānanam*). “A couple forms a productive pair” (*dvandvaṃ hi mithunaṃ prajānanam*, ŚB. 2, 3, 1, 23; see also 2, 4, 4, 10; 3, 8, 4, 7)<sup>209</sup>.

Among the texts that attest to the special significance attached to double performance or occurrence, doubling or simultaneity, or a twofold character of an event or an object is also ŚB. 1, 2, 4, 2, where brahmins make use of two (of the pieces of Indra’s fourfold *vajra*, cf. § 1) at the sacrifice, viz. of the *yūpa* and the wooden

option between two or one tops of *darbha* to be put in the sacrificial butter; ĀpG. 22, 3 orders the sacrificer to touch a cow with one blade of *darbha* (monthly *śrāddha*).

208. As to the *viśakheyūpa* of the post-Vedic period (a column representing the one and single deity) see S. Gupta, in Adyar Libr. Bull. 35, p. 189 ff.

209. For a discussion of these and other places that attest to the high importance attached to the idea of duality see J. Gonda, The dual deities in the religion of the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1974, passim (Index, p. 405, s.v. twice etc.).

sword, and noblemen of two of them in battle, viz. of the chariot and the arrow. It may finally be observed that the grasses under consideration are not the only ritual objects that often occur in pairs<sup>210</sup>. There are also two other blades of grass that are laid on the *barhis* to separate it from the *prastara*<sup>211</sup> (cf., e.g. ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 10; 2, 6, 1, 16; 3, 4, 1, 18), viz. the *vidhr̥ṣi*. The two sacrificial ladles called *darvī* (RV. 5, 6, 9) are, according to Sāyaṇa, the *juhū* and the *upabhṛt* (*juhūpabhṛtau*), the former being held in the right hand over the latter (ĀpŚ. 2, 13, 3)<sup>212</sup>; in ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 26 f. these two ladles are called yoke-fellows, compared to two draught animals that are put to the same vehicle, and are supposed to convey the sacrifice and its patron to the world of the gods. There are two spits for roasting the internal deposit of fat of the animal victim (*vapāśrapaṇī*, e.g. ŚB. 3, 8, 2, 16, where they are homologized to heaven and earth; 28 etc.). In addition to the *vidhr̥ṣi* and the *vapāśrapanyau* ŚB. 3, 6, 3, 10 mentions two ropes for binding the stake and the victim, the two churning-sticks for producing the fire, and the two *vṛṣṇau*<sup>213</sup>. There are, moreover, two vehicles in which the *soma* plants are conveyed (*havirdhāne*); two libations of butter (*āghārau*, cf. 1, 4, 4, 1<sup>214</sup>; 11, 2, 1, 5 etc.), two portions of clarified sacrificial butter (*ājyabhāgau*, 1, 6, 2, 12)<sup>215</sup> and mention is made of two expiations (e.g. ŚB. 6, 6, 4, 13).

The comparatively rare word *upolapa* has been translated by “nearly of the character of a shrub” (Monier-Williams); “aus den Stoppeln nachgewiesen” (as an adjective qualifying *darbhaḥ*) (Caland, ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11, following Rudradatta and the Vajjyantī); “from dry stubble” (van Gelder, MŚ. 1, 6, 5, 6); “(*darbha*-blades) which have grown out of stems”, Kashikar, BhŚ. 5, 19, 8, probably following Dhūrtasvāmin: *ālavebhya utthitaḥ* “sprung from (the) stubbles” or “cut near the roots”). Thus the word is generally regarded as a compound (*upa* + *ulapa* “bush, shrub”), but according to Monier-Williams it means “a species of soft grass”<sup>216</sup>. The form *upolava* (Kaus. 18, 33) is no doubt a *prākṛitism*<sup>217</sup> and *ulapa* probably a loanword from a Dravidian language<sup>218</sup> or related with Dravidian words. In a corrupt note by a scholiast on Kaus. 18, 33 *upolava* is said to denote grasses (*tr̥ṇāni*) which are well known in Malava (Malwa) and are characterized by the fact that their stalks are crushed<sup>219</sup>. Since, moreover, the compound in the passages known to me

210. RV. 2, 39, 1 does not prove (as is Ch. Sen’s opinion, A dictionary of the Vedic rituals, Delhi 1978, p. 64) that there originally were two pressing-stones.

211. I refer to ch. XI below.

212. See Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. XXVIII and XXXI, s.v. and p. 256; Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 68, n. 1.

213. See ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21 and p. 181.

214. See Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 121, n. 1.

215. See also Gonda, Dual deities, p. 375 ff.

216. According to P.K. Gode and C.G. Karve, The practical Sanskrit-English dictionary, Poona 1957, I, p. 478 *ulapa* has three meanings: 1 a creeping plant, a spreading creeper; 2 soft grass, the grass or reed saccharum cylindricum; 3 a shrub or bush.

217. See also L. Renou, Introduction générale to J. Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik, Göttingen 1957, p. 16 (cf. Wackernagel, ibid. I, p. 117, and A. Debrunner, ibid. Nachträge zu Bd. I, p. 64).

218. Cf. Tamil *ulavai* “branch, shrub”; see T. Burrow, in BSOAS 12, p. 367; Mayrhofer, Etym. Wörterbuch, I, p. 111.

219. If it is allowed to read *myditodyāma* (*ḥ*) instead of *-sa* (*ḥ*) and to translate it in this way.

always accompanies the noun *darbha* it evidently denotes a special form of *darbha*. Thus in Kauś. 18, 33 a translation “four bunches of *darbha* grasses which have grown on (out of) stubbles”<sup>220</sup> is to be preferred to “... of *darbha* stalks”<sup>221</sup>. Since according to Keśava this rite is expected to fulfil any wish and some of the mantras that may be muttered (e.g. AVŚ. 1, 5, 4; 1, 6, 1; 3) are prayers for wealth and health or for remedy, the ‘symbolism’ of the grass that grows again out of the stubbles is clear. The other material used for the fire is a stick of *palāśa* wood, probably because this tree (also called *parṇa*), which is believed to have arisen from a fallen leaf of *soma*<sup>222</sup>, was regarded as the birth-place of all trees (AiB. 2, 1, 12) and could therefore likewise ‘symbolize’ the idea of regeneration. The other occurrences of this “renewed” *darbha* are exclusively found in the descriptions of the renewed setting up of the sacred fires (*punarādihāna*), where it was of course supposed to contribute to the success of this rite; see KS. 8, 15; 99, 3; KapS. 8, 3; MS. 1, 7, 2: 111, 14 (these three texts state that in using this *darbha* one gains the fire that has been produced from the water (and) from the plants); MŚ. 1, 6, 5, 6; VārŚ. 1, 5, 1, 7; 9; BhŚ. 5, 19, 8; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11; HŚ. 3, 6, 11.

As to the *ulapa* (or *ulupa*) grass, this is by preference used in uninterrupted layers (*ulaparāji* “line or row of *ulapa*”). Such a row or layer connects the chariot by which the bridal couple is conveyed with their house when they are to walk to it (MG. 1, 14, 4 f.; VG. 15, 15 f.; KG. 28, 1) and obviously is visibly to demonstrate the existence of a connexion between the bride’s home which was also the scene of the wedding ceremony on the one hand and the house of the married couple on the other. The continuous row of *ulapa* which is strewn from the *gārhapatya* up to the *āhavanīya* is consecrated with the mantra “thou art the continuation (*samtati*) of the sacrifice, for this continuation I strew thee” (BhŚ. 1, 17, 4; ĀpŚ. 1, 15, 4; MŚ. 1, 2, 1, 19); for such a row from the pole of the back line (of the *vedi*) to the *uttaravedi* see MŚ. 2, 2, 2, 12; 2, 3, 6, 13; cf. 2, 4, 4, 19; 2, 5, 1, 24. See also BhŚ. 7, 6, 11; 8, 12, 12; 12, 2, 12; 14, 20, 2. In the section on the funeral rites BhPit. 1, 2, 4 orders the *adhvaryu* to strew three lines of *ulapa* grass ending towards the west and to cook rice on the *anvāhāryapaçana* fire. Dealing with the various methods of obtaining the fire for the cremation of a man who has established his sacred fires (*āhilāgni*) ĀgnG. 3, 5, 2: 142, 2 argues as follows: “or one sets fire on three rows of *ulapa*, takes an *ulmuka* (a piece of burning charcoal for kindling a fire) from the place where these fires come together and cremates him with that (fire)”.

A continuous (*samtala*) row of *ulapa* is strewn south of the *vihāra* (i.e. the three sacrificial fires and the place between them) fires, beginning at the eastern side of the *āhavanīya*, a second row north of the fires, one east of the *āhavanīya*, their tops towards the south and (finally) on the north side (MŚ. 1, 2, 1, 2; see also 1, 7, 3, 45; 1, 8, 1, 24. For strewing grass so that two rows are connected see JG. 1, 1: 2,

220. Krick, Ritual der Feuergründung, p. 518, n. (the correct translation); p. 540 (an incorrect translation).

221. Caland’s translation, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 47, followed by Renou, l. cit.

222. Cf. also Eggeling, Śat. Br. V, p. 122 n.

5. – If the *gārhapatya* fire is extinguished one may reobtain it from the contact of the stone-pieces (rubbed against each other) and the *ulaparāṅī*, which here is explained by *tṛṇavartī*, i.e. “*tṛṇa* rolled or wrapped round” (KŚ. 25, 3, 7). – In MŚ. 1, 2, 1, 17 such a row of *ulapa* is a means of covering the *praṇīta* water placed north of the *āhavanīya* (here and in § 19 van Gelder translated “dry grass”).



## Kuśa and Darbha

Occasionally, mention has already been made of the occurrence of variants, or rather of the interchangeability of *kuśa* and another word for “grass”; in the first place *darbha*. Some instances may follow here. Among those cases in which one of two parallel texts prefers *darbha*, the other *kuśa* are: ŚBK. 1, 2, 3, 9 and ŚBM. 2, 2, 3, 11; ŚB. 12, 4, 4, 6 and ŚŚ. 3, 19, 9<sup>1</sup>; ŚG. 1, 28, 7 (*kuśabhitta*) and BG. 2, 4, 15 (*darbhastamba*). At a certain moment the sacrificer who has the *vājapeya* performed puts on a garment made of *darbha* (TB. 1, 3, 7, 1) which is to purify him (see also Śālīki in BŚ. 22, 15: 138, 5), but in ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8<sup>2</sup> it is his wife who puts on a cloth made of *kuśa*, in ĀpŚ. 18, 5, 8 a cloth of *darbha*<sup>3</sup>. – For the use of both words in the same context see, e.g., ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8 *kuśam vasaḥ* and *darbhāḥ*; AVPar. 38, 2, 3 *kuśodakam* and *darbhāḥ*; ĀgnG. 3, 8, 1: 160, 9 *kuśastamba* and 3, 8, 3: 165, 6 *darbhastamba*. ĀpG. 4, 6, 11 refers with *darbhataruṅkaiḥ* to the *kuśapiñjūlāni* in 4. The compound *kuśorṇā*<sup>4</sup> in KŚ. 5, 3, 8 is in the comm. explained by “tufts of sprouts (panicles of blossoms, *mañjaritūlāni*) of *darbha* grasses”<sup>5</sup>; see also 5, 2, 15; 6, 1, 12; 7, 2, 12. Describing the *anvaṣṭakya* rites GG. 4, 2, 20 enjoins those concerned to strew (round the fire) a handful of *darbha* (*darbhamuṣṭim*) and to strew that also into the trenches which have been dug. Thereupon a layer of southward-pointed *kuśa* is spread out to the west of these pits (*kuśaiḥ*, § 23 f.). The hermit (*vānaprastha*) who is to recite the Veda should fetch *kuśa*, fuel and so on for his fire-worship (VaikhDh. 3, 5: 136, 1).

Relying on the above places, which could be multiplied<sup>6</sup>, one could be inclined to think that these two words are completely synonymous or interchangeable. Some translators have indeed regarded them as such, rendering *kuśa* by *darbha* (e.g. Caland, ŚŚ. 2, 7, 12) or *darbha* by *kuśa* (e.g. Eggeling, ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21)<sup>6</sup>. This opinion was, for instance, at least with regard to the ritual functions of these grasses expressed by Miss Viennot<sup>7</sup>, who spoke of “ces deux herbes aux fonctions rituelles

1. See p. 22 f. above.

2. See p. 35 above.

3. For KŚ. 7, 3, 1 and the corresponding ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 18 etc. see below.

4. See p. 49 above.

5. See, e.g., also TrisBrUp. 89 where mention is made of a seat fitted out with *darbha* and *kuśa*.

6. See, e.g., S. Bhattacharji, *The Indian theogony*, Oxford 1970, p. 287.

7. O. Viennot, *Le culte de l'arbre dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1954, p. 59 f.

identiques”, incorrectly adding that in the ancient texts *darbha* is found, not *kuśa*, and that from the period of the epics and the purāṇas only the name *kuśa* was retained, and observing that it has not yet been possible to establish the causes of the preference for *darbha* in the oldest sources and for *kuśa* in the post-epic literature. She also observed that some common characteristics of the two plants, which botanically are rather different, may have contributed to the confusion: propagation by means of horizontal roots, possibility of pharmaceutical use of the roots, stalks that may attain to about the same height<sup>8</sup>. Other scholars, for instance N.M. Penzer<sup>9</sup>, have taken *kuśa* to be “a peculiarly sacred kind of *darbha*”, in contrast to Basham<sup>10</sup>, who speaks of “two types of grass, *kuśa* and *darbha*”. And in the most recent publication on the sacrificial ritual<sup>11</sup> mention is made of “quantities of *darbha* grass and *kuśa*”<sup>12</sup>.

The above conclusion (synonymity of *kuśa* and *darbha*) would indeed be contradicted by some other places which, though occurring in late offshoots of the Vedic literature, clearly differentiate between *kuśa* and *darbha*. As to this differentiation, in his description of the *śimantonnayana* the author of VaikhG. 3, 12 enjoins the performer to take a sprout (*anikura*) of *kuśa* (and a bunch of *ficus oppositifolia*) together with its top and leaves which he has three times (threefold) fastened with *darbha* to the porcupine’s quill with which he has to part the hair. It seems clear that the author wishes to differentiate between grass used as binding material and the protective sprout. – The difference between the bunch of *darbha* put on the ground and the fresh *kuśa* sprouts that after being used as a tool for anointing are placed on it needs no comment (ĀgnG. 3, 7, 2: 155, 17). – The man who worships Viṣṇu according to the rules laid down in VaikhG. 4, 12 should prepare for the god a seat of *kuśa*, of flowers or of *darbha* (4, 12: 64, 16, the text is quite explicit: *anyatamena*). One should not void urine and faeces in a river ..., on *kuśa* or *darbha* (VaikhDh. 2, 9: 127, 12); whatever the difference, neither grass should be defiled in this way; notice that no mention is made of *trṇa* etcetera. – In ĀgnG. 3, 3, 2: 132, 21 dealing with the preparation of an oblation to be offered to the Fathers (*svadhā*) honey is stirred with a piece (that has been cut, *lava*) of *kuśa* (which should be rather strong and solid); the scum is put on, and covered with, *darbhāḥ*.

What is the meaning of the compound *kuśadarbhān* which, described as “ancient” (*purāṇān*), occurs between hemp and a bunch of wool among the requisites to be collected for the *śrāmaṇaka* fire (VaikhDh. 2, 4: 124, 5) of one who wishes to renounce the world (Caland translated “old *darbha*-grass”): “*kuśa* doing duty for *darbha*”?<sup>13</sup> Or simply *kuśa* and *darbha*?

8. I am not qualified for verifying the statements Miss Viennot makes concerning the botanical peculiarities, geographical distribution etc. of these plants.

9. In his note on Kathās. 22, 196 in Tawney and Penzer, *The ocean of story*, II, p. 151, n. 3.

10. A.L. Basham, *The wonder that was India*, London 1956, p. 319.

11. Staal, *Agni*, I, p. 240; see also II, p. 458.

12. Dealing with the *śrāddha* the author of MārḱPur. 28, 41 ff. states that the man who knows the rule should give *kuśa* for a *viṣṭara*, worship with the *arghya* and so on, give *pavitras*, thereupon perform the circumambulation for the Fathers and give a double quantity of *darbha*.

13. See also TriBrU. 2, 90 *darbhakuśakṛṣṇājnādibhiḥ*.

So the question arises, whether the author of ĀśvG. 4, 8, 27, stating that the blood of the victim of the *śulagava* (“spit-ox sacrifice”) must be offered to the serpents on rows of *darbha* or on wicker-work rings, likewise distinguished between two sorts of grass or both compounds (*darbhavīṭā*) and *kuśāsūna* (also § 22), which in the Veda are recorded only here, were stereotyped expressions.

Some useful information can however be acquired from older texts. There is an interesting story in JB. 2, 100: to a king of the Pañcālas of the name of *Darbha* so little honour was shown that the boys expressed their contempt by calling his name after him. Not until a special sacrifice, known as “reverence” (*apaciti*), had been performed for him, did he come to be held in honour and that to such a degree that up to the present day the Pañcālas use the word *kuśa* instead of *darbha*. The avoidance of the name of deities or highly placed persons is a well-known case of verbal taboo, a phenomenon of which the speakers of a language are often very well aware<sup>14</sup>. But rather than a case of true taboo<sup>15</sup> this story seems to reveal an instance of local difference of speech: in the dialect of the Pañcālas *kuśa* obviously was the usual word, at least in the age of the author of the Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa which is much older than the above gṛhyasūtras. In this connexion it may be recalled that, as we have seen<sup>16</sup>, the texts of the White Yajurveda – of which the Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa geographically belonged to the Ganges valley and the east of Bihar – preferred, in a number of cases, *kuśa*, where the texts of the Black Yajurveda used other words, among them *darbha*<sup>17</sup>.

In continuation of the remarks made in the beginning of chapter III I now turn to another Indian statement about the relation between *kuśa* and *darbha*. Kane<sup>18</sup> did not hesitate to subscribe to the definition of *darbha* and three other words for grasses found in Vṛddhaharīta 7, 14 (and quoted as Kauśika’s in Smṛticandrikā, I, p. 108 and as Kātyāyana’s in Smṛtimuktāphala, Āhn. p. 231): *aprasūlāḥ smṛtā darbhaḥ prasūlās tu kuśāḥ smṛtāḥ | samūlāḥ kutapāḥ proktāś chinnāgrās tṛṇasamjñitāḥ*, translating these words as follows: “Those *darbha* blades from which no further blades shoot forth are called simply *darbhas*, blades from which fresh ones sprout forth are called *kuśas*, blades with their roots are called *kutapas* and those the tips of which are cut off are called *tṛṇa*”. However, as has been argued above, *tṛṇa*, being a general term for grass, is not synonymous with tipless *darbha* grass; I would translate the last two words by “if their tips are cut off, they (are no longer *darbhāḥ* but) can (should) be denoted by (the general term) “(ordinary) grass””. Moreover, ŚG. 1, 8, 14

14. See, e.g. S. Ullmann, The principles of semantics, Glasgow 1951, p. 43 f. etc. (with references).

15. BŚ. 18, 38 f.: 389, 1 gives some additional information. From the time that Keśī Dālbhya, king of the Pañcālas (on this somewhat enigmatic figure see A.A. Macdonell and A.B. Keith, Vedic index of names and subjects, London 1958, I, p. 187), being desirous of honour, had performed the *apaciti* ceremony (see also PB. 19, 8 and 9; ĀpŚ. 22, 12, 2 f.), (homonyms of) the names of kings of that people were avoided, *keśa* (hair) being replaced by *śiṣṇya* “what is on the head”, *darbha* by *kuśa* etc.

16. See p. 41 above.

17. On dialects etc. in Old Indian see J. Gonda, Old Indian, Leiden 1971, ch. I; on the regions inhabited by the various peoples and communities: L. Brucker, Die spätvedische Kulturepoche, Wiesbaden 1980.

18. Kane, History of Dharmasāstra, II, p. 657.

makes mention of *kuśa* that bears no young shoots in it. As to *kuṭapa*, this word is more than once explained as “a sort of blanket made of the hair of the mountain goat” (Devapāla, on KG. 4, 8, 8; the *bhāṣya* on VaikhG. 2, 2: 21, 14; cf. Kullūka, on Manu 3, 234 *nepālakambala*); whether or not the etymologically unexplained *kuṭapa* (Hemādri, Cat.<sup>19</sup>) “*kuśa* grass, *poa cynosuroides*” (Monier-Williams) is the same word or a homonym<sup>20</sup>, I am unable to say. In this sense it is very rare, at least in the literature under consideration: in BG. 2, 11, 63 (*aṣṭakāhoma*) *kuṭapa* (sing.) occurs in an enumeration after *kuśāḥ* and before *dūrvāḥ* as the material of which a *pavitram* for a seat etc. is made; here it obviously is not synonymous with *kuśa*. Moreover, distinctions and definitions of the above type posited by lexicographers owe their existence not infrequently and not only in ancient India to a tendency to put a more or less confused usage into order and to create a usable scientific nomenclature rather than to the desire to describe the actual usage as accurately as possible.

It is pointed out in the Petersburg Dictionary<sup>21</sup> that “das Brāhmaṇa sich des Wortes *darbha* zu bedienen pflegt, wo die Sūtra *kuśa* haben”. Bailey<sup>22</sup> rendered these words as follows: “*darbha* with its sharp points was usual in the brāhmaṇas, but was represented by the sharp-pointed *kuśa* in the sūtras”. It is worth while to check this statement.

It should first of all be noticed that the word *kuśa* does not occur in the saṃhitās. In the brāhmaṇa literature it is rare. Setting aside the story in JB. 2, 100 (see above) recounting that the Pañcālas came to substitute *kuśa* for (the likewise pointed) *darbha*, which was also the name of their king, I can mention only nine occurrences of the uncompounded word in the comparatively late ŚB., five in ŚBM. and four in ŚBK.<sup>23</sup> The adjective *kaśa* occurs in ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 8 to denote the material of which the skirt or short petticoat (*caṇḍāṭaka*) of the wife of the sacrificer was made (likewise KŚ. 14, 5, 3 *kaśam vāsaḥ ... caṇḍāṭakam*); however, when the author of the ŚB. continues to explain why she wears this cloth, he says that consisting of *darbha*, which is pure, it makes the impure part of her body pure. So *kuśa* (*kaśa*) and *darbha* denote the same material, but in his ritualistic explanation the author prefers the latter word to the former which creates the impression of being in common use to denote the stuff of which a petticoat could be made.

Interestingly enough, ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 16 and 5, 3, 2, 7 use the word *kuśa* in references to the everyday occurrence that this grass pricks, cuts and wounds. In 4, 5, 10, 6 *kuśa* is one of a number of plants that may be used if one cannot find *soma*; brown *phālguna*, *śyenahr̥ta*, *ādāra*, *dūrvā*, yellow *kuśa*, obviously a well-known name of a well-known plant. In 1, 3, 1, 3 – and in ŚBK. 2, 2, 4, 3 (two occurrences) – brushing the spoons with grass is said to be rinsing them because *kuśa* represents water, but

19. See p. 38 f. above.

20. Thus Mayrhofer, Etym. Wörterbuch, I, p. 227.

21. Petersburg Dictionary, II, 364.

22. H.W. Bailey, in Trans. Phil. Soc. 1955, p. 80.

23. These numbers are based on the Vedic Word-Concordance edited by Viśva-Bandhu Śāstri, II, 1, Lahore 1935.

1, 1, 3, 5, where a myth is told to explain this “identity”<sup>24</sup>, the author uses *darbha* which represents the water that was not putrified. The word *kuśa* does not occur in the more archaic books ŚB. VI–IX. In ŚB. 14, 1, 3, 1, which deals with the *pravargya* ritual, *kuśa* grass is spread in front of the *gārhapatya*: an unmistakably ritual use of the grass. It should be remembered that, on the one hand, the books X–XIV are no doubt younger<sup>25</sup> and, on the other, the descriptions of the *pravargya* show, as we have seen, some other terminological peculiarities. Dealing with the *punārlheyā* ŚBK. 1, 2, 3, 9 states that the fire should be taken out (i.e. from the *gārhapatya*) by means of *kuśa* (plural) and that *kuśāḥ* represent water; in the parallel passage ĪBM. 2, 2, 3, 11 the word *darbha* is twice preferred to denote the sacrificial grass.

There are also many compounds. If one is not able to procure wool for the ram and the ewe (*varuṇapraghāsa*) one may (ŚBM. 2, 5, 2, 15; ŚBK. 1, 5, 1, 13) use tufts of *kuśa*, called *kuśorṇāḥ* (*kuśamayā evorṇāḥ* “wool consisting of *kuśa*”, comm.), an expression which, denoting a well-known substitute<sup>26</sup>, may have belonged to the everyday vocabulary of the Aryans. Another compound occurs once in the late ŚB., viz. 4, 1, 12: if the sacrificial fire, though kindled, does not spring up, one should make the oblation into a substitute, for instance on a bundle of *kuśa*: *kuśastambe*, which in the comm. is replaced by *darbhastamba*.

As to the statement made in the Petersburg Dictionary, there are indeed several cases in which the ŚB. has the word *darbha*, while the KŚ. in the parallel passage prefers *kuśa*<sup>27</sup>. Thus ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 7 *darbhataruṇakam*: KŚ. 7, 2, 10 *kuśataruṇam*; ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 18 *darbhāpavitreṇa*: KŚ. 7, 3, 1 *kuśāpavitraiḥ*; ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21 *darbhataruṇake*: KŚ. 5, 1, 29 *kuśataruṇe*; 3, 6, 4, 10 *darbhataruṇakam*: KŚ. 6, 1, 12 *kuśataruṇam*; ŚB. 5, 5, 4, 22 *darbhāḥ pāvayati*: KŚ. 15, 10, 11 *kuśāḥ ... punāti*; ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 1 *darbhastambam*: KŚ. 17, 3, 1 *kuśastambam*; ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 3, *darbhāḥ ... agrāḥ*: KŚ. 17, 3, 20 *kuśāgrāṇi*; ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 1 *darbhamuṣṭim*: KŚ. 18, 3, 5 *kuśamuṣṭim*; ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 12 *samukṣati ... darbhāḥ*: 18, 3, 7 *kuśāḥ ... prokṣati*. There are also some cases of *kuśa* in KŚ. as against non-specified material in ŚB.: ŚB. 3, 7, 4, 1 “having made a rope”: KŚ. 6, 3, 27 *diviṅṇaraśanayā ... kauśyā pāśam kṛtvā*; ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 27: KŚ. 17, 3, 14 *kuśastambe*. There can be no doubt that this use of *kuśa* was on the part of the author of KŚ. not a matter of chance but a question of well-considered preference. Hence also the commentator’s definition *kuśā darbhāḥ* “when *kuśa* is used, *darbha* is meant” in the *paribhāṣā-sūtra* (general rule of interpretation) KŚ. 1, 3, 12.

This usage is, however, as far as I am able to see, characteristic of Kātyāyana’s work<sup>28</sup>. The other sūtras do not systematically replace a form of *darbha* found in their brāhmaṇa by *kuśa*. See, e.g., TS. 1, 5, 1, 4 *darbhair ādadhāti*: BhŚ. 5, 19, 8 *upolavā darbhāḥ*; ĀpŚ. 5, 27, 11 *upolavair darbhaiḥ*; TB. 1, 7, 6, 4 *ekāsatena darbhapuñjilaiḥ pāvayati*: BhŚ. 10, 5, 1 *ekaviṃśatyā darbhapuñjilaiḥ ... pāvayati*; ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 5; TB. 3, 7, 4, 11: BŚ. 1, 3: 3, 19; ĀpŚ. 1, 11, 6; TB. 3, 7, 4, 18: BhŚ. 1, 6, 11 f.; ĀpŚ. 1,

24. See p. 31 above.

25. I refer to Gonda, Vedic literature, p. 351 ff.

26. See p. 49 above.

27. For a discussion of these places see ch. III, passim.

28. This is also apparent from the context in which the observation in the Petersburg Dictionary was made, although “die Sūtra” might create misunderstanding.



6, 9; see also TĀ. 5, 10, 6; 5, 15, 1; BhŚ. 11, 16, 7<sup>29</sup>. So the preference for the term *kuśa* seems to be one of the terminological peculiarities, by which Kātyāyana's comparatively late sūtra work is characterized<sup>30</sup>.

A rapid survey of the compounds formed with these words may perhaps throw some light on the differences in use and meaning that seem to have existed between them. There are, to begin with, a few *talpuruṣa* compounds in which *tṛṇa*, *kuśa* and *darbha* occur as the first member before the same second member: *tṛṇāgra* "the top of *tṛṇa*" (e.g. KŚ. 6, 6, 14), *kuśāgra* (KŚ. 17, 3, 20), *darbhāgra* (e.g. MŚ. 1, 8, 4, 24), but there are many in which the first member is *tṛṇa*, not *kuśa* or *darbha*: *tṛṇacchedana* "cutting, destroying grass" (beside *loṣṭavimardana* "crushing lumps of clay or clods of earth", e.g. ĀpDh. 1, 32, 28) and *tṛṇacchedin*; *tṛṇanivāsana* "the throwing away of the (dry and broken) blade of grass (taken from the seat of a functionary)", ŚŚ. 4, 6, 5; here ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 23 has *tṛṇam*); *tṛṇaprāsana* "the throwing of a blade of grass (taken from the *prastara*, of which the root and the top are cut off, into the *cātvalā*", LŚ. 2, 2, 3; cf. 2, 1, 6; DŚ. 4, 1, 15; cf. 7); *tṛṇavarta* (BŚ. 6, 27: 189, 17, = *tṛṇapūla* "tuft of grass", comm.); *tṛṇasāyin* "lying, sleeping on grass" (ViDh. 50, 4, of somebody maintaining ascetic observances); *tṛṇasaṃvāha* "the whirling up of the grass" (on the ground by the wind, ĀpDh. 1, 11, 8); *tṛṇāda* "eating grass" (AVPar. 71, 5, 3, of cattle); *tṛṇāntardhāna* "(he supplies all of them successively with) a separation, covering of grass" of the same kind (?), VŚ. 3, 2, 1, 18, but see *darbhāntarhita* "(a sacrificial drink) covered by means of *darbha*" ĀśvG. 4, 7, 10; *tṛṇāpacayana* "the gathering of grass" (which has fallen on or around the hearths, ŚŚ. 2, 15, 3). It would seem that these compounds are from the semantic point of view in harmony with the meaning of the simplex *tṛṇa*, viz. "grass in a general sense, including old, used, worthless grass".

Other second members combine only with *kuśa*: *kuśakaṇṭaka* "the point of *kuśa* grass" (PG. 1, 14, 4; ŚG. 1, 20, 3 serving as a needle, cf. the comm. Nārāyaṇa: *kuśakaṇṭakam kuśo darbhas tasya kaṇṭakah sūcī*, see below); *kuśagranthi* "a knot or tie of *kuśa*" (ŚāṅkhDh. 107); *kuśalikṣṇa* (a *karmadhāraya*) "sharp like *kuśa*" (VaikhŚ. 11, 7: 127, 8); *kuśatoya* "water in which *kuśa* has been soaked" (VaikhG. 7, 3); *kuśadaṇḍaka*; *kuśadeśa* "the place (of the sacrificial area) where the *kuśa* has been put down" (ĀśvŚ. 2, 4, 14; in KŚ. 4, 14, 28 *kūrcasthāne*); *kuśapṛṣṭha* (a *bahuvrīhi*) "hump-backed like a blade of *kuśa*" (LŚ. 2, 6, 1; DŚ. 5, 2, 3, *vṛkṣasya bahiḥpradeśe kuśapatraṇa madhye unnatāḥ*, comm.); *kuśaprasū* "a young shoot of *kuśa*"; *kuśaprastara* "a mat or couch of *kuśa* (to sleep upon)" (as a penance, VāDh. 21, 8); *kuśabaddha* "tied to *kuśa*" (of a piece of gold, KŚ. 25, 3, 17); *kuśabandha* "a bond of *kuśa*" (one of the requisites of an ascetic, ĀgnG. 2, 7, 11: 119, 7); *kuśabṛṣī* "a roll or cushion of *kuśa*"; *kuśabhāra* "a load of *kuśa* (of which mats or cushions are made)"; *kuśabhitta* "(a collection of) fragments of *kuśa* (serving as an under-layer)" (ŚG. 1, 28, 7); *kuśabhitti* "a mat etc." (of such fragments, KauṣG. 1, 21, 6); *kuśavāri* "water mixed with *kuśa*"; *kuśasūna* "a bud of *kuśa*"; *kuśānkura* "a shoot or blade of *kuśa*" (used in the *śimantonnayana*

29. Places where a difference in the name of the grass between brāhmaṇa and sūtra(s) is not merely terminological are of course left out of consideration.

30. I refer to J. Gonda, *The ritual sūtras*, Wiesbaden 1977, p. 529.

ceremony, fastened, together with a bunch of ficus twigs to a porcupine's quill by means of *darbha*, VaikhG. 3, 12: 44, 10); *kuśottara* (of seats) "covered with *kuśa*" (ViDh. 73, 2). Unless due to the comparatively small number of occurrences, appearances are deceptive, the conclusion seems to be that these compounds confirm us in the opinion that in everyday life as well as for ritual purposes the long pointed stalks or shoots of *kuśa* made not only good material for pricking, binding, forming mats or underlayers and so on, but were also regarded as more usable and as being of better quality than other grasses or other vegetable material: "if no *kuśa* is available (*kuśābhāve*) one must employ *kāśa* or *dūrvā* instead" (ViDh. 79, 2); "if *kuśa* cannot be obtained (*kuśālābhe*) any grass is allowed with the exception of ..." (JG. 1, 1: 1, 11).

Attention may now be drawn to those compounds which have *darbha*, not *trṇa* or *kuśa*, as their first member: *darbhakulāya* "a woven texture or 'nest' of *darbha*" (BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 5; 13 beside *muñjakulāya*, apparently a typical ritual object<sup>31</sup>); *darbhag(u)rumuṣṭi* "a heavy (large) handful of *darbha*"<sup>32</sup> (which seems to be employed on special occasions and is said to belong to Prajāpati); *darbhanāḍī* "a tubular stalk of *darbha*" (used in preparing a ritual implement, BŚ. 1, 3: 3, 19; in making an offering 6, 12: 169, 3 f.; mentioned in an enumeration of ritual requisites 12, 9: 98, 12); *darbhapūla* "a bunch of *darbha*" (at VaikhG. 3, 16: 47, 15 used for taking fire from fire on the occasion of the ceremonious foundation of a house); *darbhaprānta* "tip of *darbha*" (at Kauś. 53, 2 among the requisites of the *godāna*, the cutting of the hair etc. of a youth); *darbhamāṇi* "darbha-gem" (used for magic purposes); *darbhavaṭu* "a (puppet representing a boy) made of *darbha*" (GG. 1, 6, 21); *darbhaśulba* "a string of *darbha*" (fastened on the neck of somebody subjected to a magic rite of atonement, Kauś. 46, 19; used to gird the waist of a bride, VāG. 14, 2); *darbhaśeṣa* "the remainder of a stalk of *darbha*" (employed in a particular rite, ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 10); *darbhasammita* "furnished with *darbha*" (soil on which *darbha* grows is from the religious point of view the best, enabling the brahmin who is selecting the site of a house to realize his ambition to become eminent in sacred illustriousness, GG. 4, 7, 9); *darbhasūcī* "a *darbha* needle (the point used as a needle)" (employed in the *śimantonayana*, ŚG. 1, 22, 8); *darbhastambha* "a pillar of *darbha*" (possibly a manifestation of Brahmā or of the Brahman, KG. 43, 4<sup>33</sup>); *darbhāmbara* "garment of *darbha*" (to be worn by those who are present at funeral rites, VaikhG. 5, 2: 71, 5); *darbhāvasfirṇa* "strewn with *darbha*" (obviously as an essential feature of a magic rite<sup>34</sup>); *darbhāhāra* "(the specialist) who is to fetch the *darbha* (for the rites described)", Kauś. 1, 24; 61, 38<sup>35</sup>); *darbheṣīkā* "a stalk of *darbha*" (used, with the choice of a *śareṣīkā* "stalk of *śara*" and a *darbhapuñjīla* "a bunch or cluster of *darbha* blades" to apply collyrium to one's eye without moving the blade in a reverse direction: a ritual act to be performed with scrupulous care by the patron of a soma ceremony, BhŚ. 10, 4, 13; ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 3 etc.; see also MG. 1, 11, 8; employed in witchcraft performances

31. See p. 129.

32. See p. 92.

33. See p. 74.

34. See p. 52 ff.

35. See J. Gonda, *The Savayajñas*. Amsterdam Acad. 1965, p. 170.

AVPar. 36, 6, 2; 36, 14, 1); *darbholka* and *darbholkā* “a firebrand or torch consisting of *darbha*” (ritually used at VaikhG. 1, 12: 13, 12 to cook the sacrificial rice and at VaikhDh. 2, 15: 132, 5 in a rite of purification). If I am not mistaken, *darbha* is in at least most of the above passages specially preferred to form instruments employed in actions that can hardly be supposed to have taken place in the same careful way or with the same intentions outside the ritual sphere; or it is the material of objects which, as far as I am able to infer from the texts, are of a specifically ritual character and probably had no counterpart in everyday non-ritual practice, or – to express myself more cautiously – which were regarded as pre-eminently suitable for ritual purposes; or also, it was believed to have inherent properties which made it appropriate to the religious circumstances and made it fulfil the requirements of ritual performances. It may be noticed that references to *darbha* being unavailable do not seem to occur in the texts. Is this due to the merest chance? Or were the authorities of the opinion that nothing could be used instead of *darbha*, when this was explicitly prescribed?

So far we have been concerned with compounds that begin with either *kuśa* or *darbha*. Let us now draw attention to those compounds in which the second member can be preceded by *kuśa* as well as *darbha*. As to *kuśataruṇa(ka)* “a young (fresh) shoot of *kuśa*”, which is rather frequent, this is, in domestic rites, used as a covering (ĀgnG. 3, 6, 2: 150, 19; 21; 3, 7, 3: 156, 20; 3, 9, 2: 168, 20); as a means of sprinkling water round the ritual fire (ŚG. 1, 8, 14; 17; in 16 such shoots are dedicated to Viṣṇu by means of water, which also in 2, 7, 28 is sprinkled on them); as a means of spirting collyrium (4, 15, 11) and anointing (ĀgnG. 3, 7, 2: 155, 15, cf. 3, 7, 1: 154, 5 in a *śanti* rite after funeral ceremonies; after being used these *kuśa* shoots are put down on a *darbhastamba*: 3, 7, 2: 155, 17); the student kneels on them (ŚG. 2, 7, 5); they can together with dry cowdung and ghee be a substitute for the *anustaraṇī* cow at a funeral rite (ĀgnG. 3, 7, 3: 157, 2); and are used for protection on the occasion of the *cūḍā* ceremony (the ‘tonsure’ of a child, ŚG. 1, 28, 12 ff.) and the *śimantonnayana* (PG. 2, 1, 10). With the intelligible exception of KŚ. – which orders those concerned to use *kuśataruṇa* for protection (in cutting down the *yūpa*, 6, 1, 12, but in ŚB. 3, 6, 4, 10 *darbhataruṇaka*; in cutting the hair or shaving, 5, 2, 15; 7, 2, 10, but in ŚB. 3, 1, 2, 7 f. *darbhataruṇaka*); as a means of offering the contents of the *phalacamasa* (pounded figs, young leaves and sour milk instead of *soma*, 10, 9, 32); for becoming “testicles” when being put on the *vedī*, 5, 1, 29 (i.e. *darbhatṛṇa*, comm.); for making fire in an expiatory rite (25, 12, 1) – this compound is rare in śrautasūtras: in BŚ. 9, 1: 265, 15 and 10, 1: 1, 13 it combines with *ḍuruāgranthi* (plur.) to form coverings; in ŚŚ. 2, 7, 12 it is laid on the liquified butter. The less frequent *darbhataruṇa(ka)*, on the other hand, is used to salve the eyes in a particular and careful way (a funeral rite, ĀśvG. 4, 6, 11; in 4 it was, as one of the requisites, called a *kuśapiṅṅūla*); is held, flaming, above the vessel with the ghee that is being elaborately prepared (JG. 1, 2: 2, 11; HG. 1, 1, 27; BhG. 1, 3: 3, 10) and in solemn rites in the special case mentioned BhŚ. 6, 14, 16 (whereas normally the *agnihotra* milk is mixed with water (6, 10, 8) the man who wishes to offer it with butter should put two sprouts of *darbha* in it; cf. also ĀpŚ. 6, 15, 5: *darbhāgre*, but in VaikhŚ. 2, 9: 28, 7 *darbhataruṇau*; as appears from BhŚ. 14; ĀpŚ. 1 this modification of the rite

produces the highest result, viz. brahminical illustriousness); to take some of the contents of a *camasa* (see above, KŚ. 10, 9, 32; ĀpŚ. 12, 24, 5; VaikhŚ. 15, 31: 209, 22); in AiB. 7, 33, 1 it is cast in the goblet of the sacrificer. – Curiously enough, the compound *kuśapiñjūla* is only found in Āśvalāyana's sūtras, which prescribe the use of such a bunch of grass at the tonsure (ĀśvG. 1, 17, 8) and *śimantonnayana* (1, 14, 4) ceremonies and in 4, 6, 4 (see above), and in case a consecrated person becomes unwell (then 21 bunches are strewn in water: ĀśvŚ. 6, 9, 1, but in the consecration ceremony AiB. 1, 3, 8 prescribes 21 *darbhapiñjūlāni* for purification). In the case mentioned ĀśvŚ. 6, 9, 1 MŚ. 3, 8, 3 has *darbhapiñjūla*, using this compound also in 1, 1, 1, 18 (where the cows are sent to graze) and 2, 1, 1, 40 (where the patron is purified with these bunches); the same compound occurs at MS. 3, 6, 2: 62, 1; 4, 8, 7: 117, 7; in KS. and KapS.; at PG. 1, 15, 4 (*śimantonnayana*); ŚG. 6, 2, 12 (in an expiatory rite); KG. 72, 1. GG. has the same form (2, 7, 5 *śimantonnayana*; 2, 9, 4; 14 tonsure; 4, 3, 2; 13 *anvaṣṭakya*), which occurs also in JG. and in Kauś. (25, 37 in a magic cure, 21 bunches; 53, 10 *godāna*; 79, 14 *śimantonnayana*). See also KB. 18, 8 (18, 5, 25): the grass used during a soma sacrifice. Like TS. and TB. BhŚ. has *darbhapuñjūla*<sup>36</sup> (used in dividing the patron's hair 10, 3, 12; in applying collyrium to his eye 10, 4, 13; in purifying him with 21 bunches 10, 5, 1 (also TB. 1, 7, 6, 4; 2, 7, 9, 5); in taking up butter 10, 4, 8); likewise ĀpŚ. 1, 2, 3 (the driving of the calves); 10, 6, 11 (the taking up of the butter that is to be used as ointment; borrowed from MS. 3, 6, 2: 62, 1 where *darbhapiñjūla*, also VaikhŚ. 12, 7: 137, 11); 10, 7, 3 (in applying the ointment); 14, 20, 8; also in BŚ. 2, 8: 45, 12 (shaving); 8, 15: 256, 15 (*agniṣṭoma*) together with *dūrvāgranthūn* (see above) put in the *camasas* (vessels for drinking the *soma* which have been cleansed and filled with water<sup>37</sup>); 25, 10: 237, 16. – The compound *kuśamuṣṭi* “a handful of *kuśa*” is found in KŚ. 1, 3, 23; 6, 2, 12; 9, 7, 1; 18, 3, 5 and in GG. 1, 8, 27 where this grass is taken from the *barhis*, dipped into the butter or the sacrificial food with an invitation addressed to the birds and thrown into the fire as a offering to Rudra. In 4, 2, 20 a *darbhamuṣṭi* is on the occasion of the *anvaṣṭakya* ceremonies thrown round the fire. In SVB. 1, 3, 2, describing a penance, it is held in the hand. This compound occurs at ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 1 (as a covering put on sacrificial food); at MG. 1, 6, 2 (seats near the fire that is being installed); JG. 2, 6; 31, 13 (as a means of sprinkling the house with the five products of the cow in a rite for prosperity of the house; likewise ĀgnG. 2, 5, 9: 88, 8; see also BG. 3, 5, 19); MŚ. 2, 5, 2, 9 where the stalks of eight such handfuls are plunged into the fire and borne flaming over all the hearths (soma sacrifice); LŚ. 2, 7, 20 and DŚ. 5, 3, 23 (dealing with *dakṣiṇās*: the mouths of the horses should be swept clean with it). – “Simply a cord of *kuśa*” (*kuśarajjum eva*) is at GG. 1, 2, 1 after a string (*sūtra*) or a (piece of) cloth (*vastra*) said to be fit for a sacrificial cord; at ĀśvG. 4, 8, 15 such ropes or creeping plants are in the *sūlagava* rite for Rudra used to bind the ox (the victim) to the post. In the magic rites Kauś. 16, 25 and 39, 19 a *darbharajju* is used for fastening or wrapping round; in MG. 1, 11, 5 for drawing together the ends of (a) garment(s?) (marriage ritual);

36. Although there is much variation in the manuscript.

37. See Caland and Henry, *L'agniṣṭoma*, p. 381.



those who are present at a funeral rite wear (under-garments made of) it (VaikhG. 5, 2: 71, 5); it is also used when those who return from the place of cremation are brought to a standstill (5, 6: 78, 16). This compound does not occur in *saṃhitās* and *brāhmaṇas*. – A *kuśastamba* “bunch or stem of *kuśa*” is ĀśvG. 1, 22, 21 used as a substitute for a *palāśa* tree round which water should be sprinkled (*medhājanana* ritual); in ĀgnG. 3, 8, 1: 160, 9 it forms part of an enumeration: *arjuna-*, *ḍurvā-*, *kāśa-*, *kuśastamba*. The appearance of a *darbhastamba* is a portent requiring a rite of appeasement (AVPar. 72, 3, 11); it should by way of expiation be given to the *agnihotra-cow* (ĀpŚ. 9, 54); if one has no fire and no other substitutes one should make an oblation on a *darbhastamba* (BhŚ. 9, 4, 11, ĀpŚ. 9, 3, 9; cf. TS. 5, 6, 4, 1; MS. 3, 4, 4: 49, 13 etc.; TB. 2, 2, 1, 3 etc.); at BŚ. 10, 24: 23, 8 such a *stamba* is put down (with the mantra “Vāc has placed thee in the ocean ...”, KŚ. 38, 13: 116, 1, cf. ĀpŚ. 19, 11, 11), or without a mantra, in a passage of the *agnicayana* ritual dealing with the placing of bricks; one of the libations by which the return from the final bath of a *rājasūya* (royal consecration) is marked is to be made on a *darbhastamba*, on an anthill<sup>38</sup> or on the dry trunk of a tree (ĀpŚ. 18, 20, 4; see also HŚ. 13, 6, 43; BŚ. 12, 16: 111, 6); those performing the rite for appeasing the evil that affects the building and its site (*vāstuśamana*) BG. 3, 5, 18 should place the remainder of the oblation on a *darbhastamba*.

Making, with all proper reserve, an attempt to summarize the above facts and inferences I am unable to escape the conviction that with regard to the use of *kuśa* and *darbha* in these Vedic texts there existed at least two more or less conflicting tendencies. On the one hand, there are indications of a certain individual or stylistic preference for the use of one of these words, the most evident cases being the absence of *kuśa* in the *saṃhitās* and its relative rareness in the *brāhmaṇas* and its frequent occurrence in the *Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra*. On the other hand, there seems to be a special liking for, a tendency to prefer the use of, *darbha*, not *kuśa*, in more complicated rites, especially in the solemn *śrauta* ceremonies and to employ *kuśa*, which often creates the impression of being less valued, less intrinsically effective, in dealing with less essential or less important actions, not infrequently especially those that are also performed in everyday life. Or should we say that there was a difference in sacredness? But there seems to be an almost unsurmountable difficulty. Am I speaking of different grasses known to Vedic man as *kuśa* and *darbha*, or of the words *kuśa* and *darbha*? That is to say, do the above occurrences of *kuśa* and *darbha* always refer to different plants or to different forms of the same or nearly the same plant (remember the definition in *Vṛddhaharīta* 7, 14<sup>39</sup>)? Or were both words occasionally, or more or less regularly, or according as circumstances, local or regional usage (remember the story of the *Pañcāla* king<sup>40</sup>), or individual preference might require, used for two related grasses?<sup>41</sup> Or also was the word *darbha* regarded as more noble or dignified – because it originally and properly denoted the better and

38. See p. 57 f.; as to the rite see Heesterman, *Royal consecration*, p. 168; 171 f.

39. See p. 99 above.

40. See p. 99 above.

41. Commentators sometimes prefer *darbha* where the texts explained have *kuśa*. But see also p. 52, fn. 2.



from the ritual point of view more suitable grass – notice that its origin is told in a mythical story, TS. 6, 1, 1, 7; ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2 – and therefore under certain circumstances also used instead of *kusa* or preferred by brahmin ritualists<sup>42</sup> This would be an instance of a well-known linguistic phenomenon: a thing (or person) is given the name of a somewhat more valued or dignified thing (person) which (who) belongs to the same class, resembles it or is used for the same purpose, when it occurs in a somewhat more exalted context, belongs to a person of higher rank, or is employed for or adapted to a more lofty purpose. In certain circumstances one may, for instance, refer to a man's *salary* although *wages* would in fact be correct. These possibilities are, moreover, not mutually exclusive. It would seem to me that for the time being the Vedic texts do not allow us to express a more definite opinion.

We should, moreover, be well aware of the fact that the ancient Vedic ritualists were no botanists and that for all their interest in classification and systematization they would not have succeeded in arranging the various species and sub-groups of grasses according to some systematic principle. A classification of the about 500 genera and perhaps 5000 species of grasses known – and each year more are discovered and described – on which all botanists can agree has up to the present day not been formulated<sup>43</sup>. Classification of the grasses is indeed very difficult because of their great complexity as well as the extreme reduction and uniformity of the flowers which offer few clues as to relationships. It is, on the other hand, relatively easy to recognize certain members of the family and early attempts at a scientific classification were therefore based on a more or less superficial understanding of perceptible characteristics and the general appearance of the plants. But it was only in 1753 that Linnaeus succeeded in separating the true grasses from the sedge and rush families. Grasses are therefore no exceptions to the well-known difficulties found in identifying plants mentioned in Sanskrit works. For *darbha* alone there exist at least eleven Latin names, more than once denoting different plants<sup>44</sup>. As already stated, many botanists equate it with *kusa*, others distinguish one from the other.

42. Notice that *kusa* (*kusa*) does occur in the Buddhist Pali texts, while (according to T.W. Rhys Davids and W. Stede, The Pali Text Society's Pali-English Dictionary, Chipstead 1921 ff., III, p. 149) the counterpart of *darbha* (*dabbha*) is (only) used in references to brahmanic (Vedic) rites: Dīgha Nik. I, p. 141 *dabbhā lūyimsu barihisatthāya* "darbhāḥ are cut to serve as *barhis*" and the corresponding places MajjhNik. 1, 344; Ang. 2, 207; Pug. 56. It would be worth while to try to find other occurrences.

43. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1970 ed., X, p. 700.

44. I refer to Meulenbeld. Mādhavanīdāna, p. 561 f.

## Dūrvā

*Dūrvā* (Hindi *dūb*, *cynodon dactylon*, Linn., also *agrostis linearis*)<sup>1</sup>, found throughout the warm regions of the earth, is a tenacious creeping plant, which spreads rapidly, throwing out perpetually new branches, a hard perennial grass with creeping culms rooting at nodes and forming spreading mats on the surface of the soil<sup>2</sup>. It grows in marshy land, connected with water (TĀ. 5, 10, 6)<sup>3</sup>. It is noted for its dark-green colour (cf. Varāhamihira, BS. 5, 58). "It has a wonderful power of remaining green, being the grass of all Indian grasses which retains its succulence throughout the extreme heat of summer"<sup>4</sup>. It is therefore the sweetest and most nutritious pasture for cattle. Its flowers are extremely lovely. One should keep this character and outward appearance of the plant in mind in reading many of the following passages, making a study of its ritual uses<sup>5</sup>, and trying to understand why it is, for instance, 'identified' with cattle (ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 10) and with vital sap (*rasa*) and vital breath (*prāṇa*, 12)<sup>6</sup>.

In the last stanza (8) of RV. 10, 142, which describes a forest-fire and tries to put an end to Agni's destructive activity, the poet expresses the wish that when the fire is over, there will grow again, on the god's tracks, flowery *dūrvā* grasses, large pieces of water and lotus flowers (the only ṛgvedic occurrence of *puṇḍarīka*). In a slightly different form this stanza is as AVŚ. 6, 106, 1 (AVP. 19, 33, 5)<sup>7</sup> at Kauś. 52, 5 used in a rite to prevent the conflagration of one's house: one pronounces the *sūkta* over water and throws this in a pit between the fire and the house; the references to the plants are, just as the water, obviously taken to be a means of preventing the fire from drawing near. Notice the combination of the *dūrvā* and the highly

1. This word is etymologically unclear; the etymology proposed by A. Walde and J. Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterbuch der indogerm. Sprachen*, I, Berlin and Leipzig 1930, p. 803 and J. Pokorny, *Indog. etymol. Wörterbuch*, Bern and München 1959, p. 209 is in my opinion unconvincing.
2. See B.L. Manjunath (ed.), *The wealth of India*, Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Delhi 1948-, II, p. 420 (with fig. 151) and see AiB. 8, 8: "it is fastened as it were to the ground with descending shoots and is supported as it were".
3. Compare also Varāhamihira, BS. 54, 47 "where in a waterless region ... soft *vīraṇa* and *dūrvā* are conspicuous, there is water at a depth of one man's length".
4. R. Wallace, *India in 1887*, p. 282 quoted by Eggeling, *Śat. Br.* III, p. 187, n. 3.
5. For folklore connected with the *dūrvā* or *dūb* see, e.g. B.A. Gupte, *Hindi holidays and ceremonials*, Calcutta and Simla 1919, p. XXXIII f. etc.
6. In ŚB. 4, 5, 10, 5 the species *aruṇadūrvā* "reddish brown *dūrvā*" is said to be akin to *soma* of which it is a substitute (see also KŚ. 25, 12, 20; ĀpŚ. 14, 24, 12). I refer to R. Gordon Wasson, *Soma*, New York 1968, p. 96 f., 127 (also on *kuśa*); on p. 97 also on *muñja*.
7. For the use of this stanza in the *agnicayana* see Staal, *Agni*, I, p. 388; for *dūrvā* see also p. 395.

valued blossom of the lotus of which a wreath is made (TS. 1, 8, 18, 1; TB. 1, 8, 2, 1), and which is offered as an oblation (ŚB. 5, 4, 5, 6 ff.) and said to be an image of the sky (ŚB. 5, 4, 5, 14)<sup>8</sup>.

In Kauś. 8, 16 the tips (*prānta*) of blades of *dūrvā* are reckoned among the auspicious objects (which are *res faustae* free from evil, *sāntāḥ*) which can be used in the preparation of propitiatory water (*sāntyudaka*) and so on (Keśava). In a passage dealing with the material of the kindling-sticks (*samidh*) to be used according to the result desired the author of AVPar. 26, 5, 4 says that the one who is desirous of a full length of life (*āyus*) will have his wish by means of kindling-sticks of *dūrvā* culms<sup>9</sup>. The same relation between *dūrvā* and a complete duration of life is attested to by 36, 4, 2 advising to offer this grass to certain manifestations of Rudra-Śiva to obtain the fulfilment of this wish. In 21, 2, 3 long-jointed pieces of the *śamī* tree (whose name suggests *sānti*) and of *dūrvā* (notice the compound *śamīdūrvātarūṇām*) are said to bring fortune in a *sānti* ceremony, if they are sound and not crooked: the well-known negative attitude towards defects and disability and the principle that like produces like or that an effect resembles its cause. The lustration of elephants (*hastinīrājana*) requires, *inter alia*, the *prśnīparṇī* (one of the plants near which no burial ground for the bones of cremated corpses should be made (ŚB. 13, 8, 1, 16)), the *dūrvā*, and the lotus (AVPar. 18, 1, 17).

On the occasion of a ceremony for an auspicious day (*puṇyāha*) as described in BGŚ. 1, 10 four brahmins should two and two, not with empty hands, (but) bearing *darbha* or *dūrvā* grasses, be standing, facing east on a pure and level place (§ 2): a ceremonious gesture and an auspicious attitude.

A young man who wishes to marry a girl should test her: he should take eight clods of earth, from a furrow, a sacrificial bank, a *dūrvā* grass field and so on; if she takes a clod from saline soil etc., he should not marry her; (if one of those mentioned above, which are auspicious, he should, MG. 1, 7, 9 f.). The same test occurs with variants in several other gṛhyasūtras, which make no mention of *dūrvā* or other grass.

When the tawny-coloured ants of the variety called *sithilī* appear in different places of one's house etc. foreboding various events and different manifestations of evil one should offer with different fuel. If one finds them in the west or north-west, the fuel should consist of *dūrvā* (BGŚ. 3, 13, 7 f.); also, if these ants appear in the *sabhā* (place for social gatherings etc., § 16). In the latter case *dūrvā* grass was probably considered to be conducive to the prevention of instability of the village and the household, in the former to the prevention of theft and blemishes in a virgin.

This grass occurs also in the precept laid down in BGŚ. 2, 13, 20: when, in a ceremonious consecration of an image of Viṣṇu the god has been invoked one offers him, among other things, water for washing his feet "with a pitcher with *dūrvā*, *viṣṇukrānta* (a name of various plants), cultivated millet, and costus speciosus (? , *padma-*

8. On the *dūrvā* and the lotus see also H. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, Berlin 1879, p. 70 and 71.

9. In post-Vedic literature (e.g. LiPur. 85, 188) *dūrvā* is among the sacrificial materials that are conducive to longevity.

*pattra*)<sup>10</sup>. The Pūjāprakāśa<sup>10</sup>, p. 56 informing its readers of Viṣṇu's favourite flowers adds the *ḍurvā* grass.

In the rite for overcoming death (*mṛtyuñjaya*) BGŚ. 3, 11 are, among other things, required groups of three *ḍurvā* blades of the length of a short span.

The *ḍurvā* is also mentioned in texts dealing with omīna. In AVPar. 63, which describes the characteristics of *pariveśas*, i.e. rings of light surrounding celestial bodies, those halos that have the appearance of *madhūka* (bassa latifolia, from which arrack is distilled), ghee, spirituous liquor (*maṇḍā*) as well as those that have the dark (green) colour of the *ḍurvā* (*ḍurvāśyāmāḥ*) portend rain<sup>11</sup>. – If water, meat or *ḍurvā* catch fire spontaneously, the king will die (AVPar. 70 b, 19, 7). – If the fire has the sound of a bull, an elephant, a cloud, a water-stream ..., if it has the colour of the lotus-fibre, the red lotus or *ḍurvā* ...<sup>12</sup>, it is a good omen (AVPar. 24, 2, 5).

In an unclear paragraph occurring in a description of ceremonies to obtain various wishes (AVPar. 36, 19, 1) sesame seeds, *ḍurvā*, the three sweet substances (sugar, honey, ghee)<sup>13</sup> and scattered threshed and winnowed rice are prescribed as a means of suppressing a disease or disorder caused by, or impending as a result of, an (unsuccessful or incorrectly performed?) burnt-offering (*homato vyādhinigraham*)<sup>14</sup>.

In a night-ceremony for the benefit of a king who is troubled by insomnia a lamp is carried three times around the patient (AVPar. 7). In a vessel that is adorned with flowers are placed mustard-seed<sup>15</sup>, unhusked-barley corns (which are often used in magic)<sup>16</sup>, panic seed<sup>17</sup>, and *ḍurvā* which bestows hundredfold wishes (*śatā-varīm*, 7, 1, 6). – Almost the same ingredients – *ḍurvā*, barley and mustard-seed – are thrown into a vessel filled with water which is deposited on fresh cow-dung by those who participate in the funeral described at ŚŚ. 4, 15, 5 (and see KauthG. 5, 4, 6) after they have returned home, no doubt to avert the evil, *in casu* the contagion by death, which they might have contracted.

A characteristic of the nuptial ceremonies is the *āsmāroṇa*, the treading by the bride with her right foot on a stone. This stone has been placed in a lump of dung (Kauś. 77, 17 f.; see also AVŚ. 14, 1, 47) – the stone symbolizes firmness, imperishableness, durability<sup>18</sup>, dung fecundity<sup>19</sup>. On this stone are laid four tops of *ḍurvā*

10. Quoted by P.V. Kane, History of dharmasāstra, II, Poona 1941, p. 732. This does not of course exclude the possibility of relations with other deities (with Mitra, e.g., Mayamata, 8, 3).

11. As to dark colours and rain see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 44.

12. For this passage see L.P. van den Bosch, Atharvavedapariśiṣṭa, ch. 21–29, Thesis Utrecht 1978, p. 84 f.

13. For offering *ḍurvā* soaked in honey see, e.g., LiPur. 43, 14. An interesting post-Vedic ritual use of *ḍurvā* occurs in MārḥP. 48 (51), 52 ff. If one wishes to counteract the evil influence exerted by Kalahā, the female eponymous deity of quarrels (*kalaha*) "who is always creating disturbances in men's houses", one should throw shoots of *ḍurvā* smeared with honey, ghee and milk in a *balī* ceremony, offer a sacrifice in the fire, and extol one's friend in order to propitiate the evil.

14. For *ḍurvā* in post-Vedic *sānti* rites see, e.g., the extract from BhaviṣyottaraPur. 143 in P.V. Kane's long chapter XXI on *sāntis*, in History of Dharmasāstra, V, Poona 1962, p. 762.

15. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 121.

16. See, e.g., Caland, in Altind. Zauberritual, p. 71. Barley is also a means of averting evil.

17. *priyaṅgu*, cf., e.g., Kauś. 8, 20; 32, 2.

18. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 135 f.

19. In other countries the bride was made to go round a dung-hill (Meyer, Trilogie, II, p. 50).

blades in butter on the middlemost leaf of a *palāśa* tree<sup>20</sup>, which is also at Kauś. 34, 4; 35, 7 and elsewhere used in fertility rites.

It is not easy to say why there should be, in this and in the following rite, four tops of *dūrvā*. Is it due to the predilection of the adherents of the Atharvaveda to this number or is it meant to suggest super-perfection?<sup>21</sup> In a remedial rite for stopping an excessive flow of menstrual blood etc. (see AVŚ. 1, 17) one makes the patient drink a mixture of thick sour milk and ground sesame, (likewise ground) tops of *dūrvā*, four in number and water (Kauś. 26, 13).

The one who wishes to worship the slender crescent of the new moon when first visible should take tops of *dūrvā* blades and water in his *añjali*, i.e. the open hands placed side by side and slightly hollowed, whilst reciting AVŚ. 7, 81 in which the crescent is besought to give him progeny, wealth, cattle and so on (Kauś. 24, 18), or briefly, prosperity (Keśava).

In accordance with a frequently mentioned custom the remnants of the offerings are at the end of a rite to be placed on clumps or bunches of *dūrvā* (*dūrvāstambe*): to the east of the fire BGŚ. 1, 20, 7 with the formula *bhūtebhyah svāhā*, which shows that these remnants are destined for any living beings, inclusive of spirits, but mainly for the demons, etc.<sup>22</sup>, see e.g. ŚB. 11, 5, 6, 1; likewise 1, 24, 6, in a rite for the benefit of somebody who has seen a thousand moons etc., with TS. 1, 3, 14, 41 “that he give thee a complete life-time, Agni ...; I drive away the disease from thee” and m “giving a complete life-time, O Agni ... having drunk the ghee ...; protect him”; 3, 11, 4 in a rite to overcome death with TS. 2, 6, 10, 2 “we desire that happiness and welfare”, i.e. “... the consummation of the sacrifice” (ŚB. 1, 9, 1, 26); 4, 1, 3 in a *balī* rite for averting death with TS. 5, 5, 9, 3 “homage be to (the feared god) Rudra (who is) in the fire, the waters, the plants ...”; 5, 8, 4.

Towards the end of an oblation with fire made in order to obtain a full length of life (*āyusyahoma*) the performer should place the remains of this offering on a clump of *dūrvā* with TS. 4, 5, 10, 2 e and 3 f = ṚV. 1, 114, 7 and 8 in which Rudra is besought to spare the lives of young and old, great and small, cows and horses and so on, and thereupon eat, together with his people (attendants), a dish of barley or rice boiled in milk with the mantra “thou art a full length of life ...” (ĀgnG. 2, 5, 3: 81, 14). Here Rudra, whose position is strikingly different from that of the other gods, is propitiated with remnants: compare GG. 1, 8, 28 where he receives in the same manner the grass (*kuśamuṣṭī*) which is thrown into the fire. For the same custom see BG. 3, 7, 25; BGŚ. 5, 8, 4.

There are exceptions, however, most of them intelligible: in the ear-boring ceremony BGŚ. 1, 12, 5 the remnants are with the same stereotyped formula said to be placed on bamboo leaves; in the mantra homage is paid to the Ocean (TS. 4, 6, 2, 6 r, appropriately used in ĀpŚ. 17, 14, 4, here probably because bamboo, material for making flutes, must be well watered); in a *śanti* rite BGŚ. 4, 20, 6 on *sāmī*

20. Cf. Kauś. 21, 2; 48, 28; 86, 6 and see W. Caland in ZDMG 53, p. 212.

21. I refer to Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 36 f.

22. On the *bhūtāḥ* see E. Arbman, Rudra, Uppsala 1922, p. 156 ff.



leaves<sup>23</sup> with TS. 5, 5, 9, 3 i (see above); in consecrating an image of Viṣṇu BGŚ. 2, 13, 37 one places the remnants on *aśvattha* leaves<sup>24</sup> with *bhūr bhuvā suvar om*, which represents the tripartite universe; likewise 2, 16, 40 (dealing with an image of Rudra); otherwise (*udumbarastambe*, BGP. 1, 13, 26; see also BGŚ. 1, 1, 29).

In a description of the construction of the great fireplace in the form of the sun (*sāvitra 'gniḥ*, ĀpŚ. 19, 11, 11) we read that at a given moment a vessel with water is set down with the mantra "the word has placed thee in the ocean, (thee) that procurest offspring (*prajāvanim*) and increase of prosperity ..." (cf. KS. 38, 13: 116, 1). The connexion between mantra and ritual act is much clearer in BŚ. 10, 24: 23, 8 (cf. 22, 5: 124, 5), where in a similar context first a vessel with water is brought near and then with this mantra a bunch of *darbha* is placed upon (it). At a later moment a bunch of *dūrvā* is "placed upon" and addressed with RV. 10, 142, 8 expressing the wish that flowering *dūrvā* grasses may come up and a spring or a lake (come into existence)<sup>25</sup>.

On the occasion of a *nāndī(mukha)śrāddha*, a particular ceremony in honour of the deceased, one should offer a meal to the brahmins, kindle the fire and spread *dūrvā* (that is to say, no other grasses) (round it), lay down a pair of *pavitras*<sup>26</sup> on each of the places where the guests are expected to partake of their food, and so on (BhG. 3, 16: 85, 2).

Among the requisites for a royal ceremony are beautiful roots and shoots of *dūrvā*; upon these one should place a seat made of gold or silver (AVPar. 5, 2, 5). This seems to be one of those cases in which *dūrvā* is not only protective but also honorific. On the other hand, an under-layer of *dūrvā* was obviously regarded as according well with gold and silver.

In contrast to other manuals (e.g. HG. 1, 29, 1) BhG. 1, 27: 28, 3 enjoins the man who returns home after having been on a journey to take two green blades of *dūrvā* before starting to recite the mantra "house do not fear ..., bringing strength (vigour, food, *ūrj*) we come ...". Why should he have *dūrvā* in his hand? Is this magic container, as elsewhere, expected to protect its bearer, or is it, in harmony with the contents of the mantras, a talismanic charm that will bring safety and good fortune to the house addressed and place confidence in the speaker's honesty? Or, what perhaps is most probable, does it here fulfil both functions, characterizing the solemn occasion as a rite?<sup>27</sup>

When one proposes to study the *pravargya* texts according to the instructions given in ĀpŚ. 15, 21, 10 one should leave the village, kindle a fire, touch hot water and

23. For the *samī* (suggesting *śanti*) see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 111.

24. For the *aśvattha* and Viṣṇuism see Gonda, Aspects, p. 12 (with references) and BhGītā 10, 26 and 15, 1 (with the note by W.D.P. Hill, The Bhagavadgītā, London 1928, p. 236 f.).

25. For a translation see Y. Ikari and H. Arnold in Staal, Agni, II, p. 529.

26. See p. 30 f.; 42 f.; 92 ff. etc. For *śaṣṭāpānitre* "strainers made of shoots" see MŚ. 5, 2, 4, 11.

27. In a later casuistic passage, ŚivaPur., Rudras. I, 14, 25 f., a person desirous of final emancipation should worship Śiva with *darbha*, one desirous of long life with *dūrvā*. Ibidem, IV, 18, 44 a handful of *dūrvā* with three knots and without roots is prescribed for worship; there shall be 101 shoots and the god (Gaṇeśa) shall be worshipped with 21 (notice the combination of these numbers).

so on, sit down on *darbha*, holding *dūrvā* in one's hand. The water should be hot because the offering consists of a hot drink prepared in a pot that has been heated<sup>28</sup>.

Although the ancient Indians usually swore and entered on a vow by water, Varuṇa's element – that is, one swore an oath while touching water or a vessel containing water<sup>29</sup> – places are not wanting in which no mention is made of this liquid and the procedure required other objects<sup>30</sup>. Without entering into particulars regarding the oath performed by touching or by raising the hand<sup>31</sup>, I recall that it is fairly certain that the ancient Romans in taking the oath touched a fetish stone; we also know that various other peoples touched (or still touch) another object or the ground. It is true that such contacts were to strengthen the magic effect of the oath, but one should not fail to notice, first that the objects touched were supposed to be characterized by their own specific powers and properties, in the second place that not all oaths were taken for the same reason or on the same occasion, and lastly that the function of the objects touched, held in the hand, thrown away, or trodden upon – each procedure being characterized by a 'symbolism' of its own – and the relation between the person swearing and the deity or power invoked could be different according to the type and character of the oath taken.

The ceremony described in ViS. 9, 1 ff. is an unmistakable case of an oath of purification such as exists among many peoples: if someone is accused of theft he strikes, for instance, the earth with his hand and by this gesture he has sworn an oath<sup>32</sup>. The ceremony is described under the heading *samaya*, i.e. "convention, agreement"<sup>33</sup>, a concept which corresponds also with what in modern translations is called "proof", "ordeal" as well as "oath" and even "imprecation"<sup>34</sup>. This passage deals with cases of denial of a deposit and of alleged theft or robbery and gives a schedule of the objects "by which" the members of the four social orders "must be made to swear" – thus Jolly's translation<sup>35</sup> – if they protest their innocence. If the value of the property claimed by the opposing party is less than one *kr̥ṣṇala*, one should cause a *śūdra* to swear, not "by a blade of *dūrvā* grass" (Jolly)<sup>36</sup>, but while he holds *dūrvā* in his hand (... *śūdraṃ dūrvākaraṃ śāpayet*). If the value amounts to

28. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 23.

29. See H. Lüders, Der indische Eid, in Varuṇa, Göttingen 1951-1959, p. 655 ff.

30. See, e.g., J.J. Meyer, Sexual life in ancient India, London 1930, Index, p. 581, s.v. oath; R. Gopal, India in the kalpasūtras, Delhi 1959, p. 200 (cf., e.g., ĀpDh. 2, 11, 29, 7).

31. See, e.g., R. Hürzel, Der Eid, Leipzig 1902; R. Lasch, Der Eid, Stuttgart 1908, esp. p. 25; 32 ff.; 42 ff.; 105 f.; J. Pedersen, Der Eid bei den Semiten in seinem Verhältnis zu verwandten Erscheinungen, Strassburg 1914, esp. p. 181; 186; Wagenvoort, Roman dynamism, p. 50 ff.

32. For purificatory oaths in ancient Egypt see E. Révillout, in Revue égyptienne, 5, p. 25 ff., for Africa W. Schilde, Orakel und Gottesurteile in Afrika, Leipzig 1940 and E. Dammann, Die Religionen Afrikas, Stuttgart 1963, p. 165 ff.

33. J.D.M. Derrett, Religion, law and the state in India, London 1968, Index, p. 611; R. Lingat, The classical law of India, translated by J.D.M. Derrett, Berkeley 1973, Index, s.v. ordeal.

34. See, e.g., ViS. 6, 23; 9, 1; 12; 10, 7; 45, 28; GautDh. 8, 11; 18, 10.

35. J. Jolly, The Institutes of Viṣṇu, Oxford 1880 (Delhi 1965), p. 53.

36. Then one should have expected the instrumental of the noun *dūrvā*; see, e.g., Manu, 8, 113 *satyena śāpayed vipraṃ kṣatriyaṃ vāhanāyudhaiḥ* ... "let him (the judge) cause a brahmin to swear by truth (his veracity), a *kṣatriya* by his chariot (or mount) and (or) by his weapons ...". This passage (8, 109 ff.) deals with a decisory oath and an ordeal.

more he should swear, whilst holding, successively, a blade of sesame, a blade of silver, a blade of gold and a lump of earth taken from a furrow, an object almost devoid of economic value, but supposed to exert a purificatory influence<sup>37</sup> and used to avert evil<sup>38</sup>. Sesame is elsewhere (cf. VGP. 10, 6; 16; Kauś. 46, 33) used in expiations, and gold and silver are regarded as auspicious<sup>39</sup> and as giving protection (e.g., ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 11, as to silver 14, 1, 3, 14), the former being also used as an amulet (ŚG. 1, 24, 11; MG. 1, 2, 14), the latter being at ŚB. 12, 4, 4, 7 fastened to the protective *darbha*. So the probabilities seem to be in favour of the supposition that the person who is swearing holds these objects, not by way of a merely symbolic gesture, but in order to come into contact with their specific inherent power and to derive from that contact strength, an invigorating effect, protection, and (or) a more or less consecrated or dedicated condition, in short to create a safe and suitable situation. That according to circumstances there could be some diversity of opinion with regard to the function and significance of the rite is self-evident. Some may have regarded it as a dedication, others as a means of fending off demonic spirits.

The person who wishes to have a mud- or clay-bath in accordance with the directions given in BGŚ. 5, 4, 1 should address the Earth with the mantras TĀ. 10, 1, 8 (MNU. 4, 4 or 89 f.) “O thou that art gone over by horses and chariots, by Viṣṇu, (thou art) the Earth, a bearer of wealth; I shall bear thee with my head; protect me at every step (on every occasion)” – which, being one of the many mantras to be used in connexion with ritual ablutions, follows after MNU. 87 f. – and TĀ. 10, 1, 7 (MNU. 83 f.), which has been quoted above (“the goddess (who is) the most excellent among a thousand ...”), where it forms part of a series of mantras used to consecrate the *ḍurvā*. He recites these mantras *ḍurvābhiḥ* which, I think, means “holding *ḍurvā* stalks in his hand”. Thereupon he takes, at the bank of a river, a lump of earth with TĀ. 10, 1, 8 (MNU. 4, 5 or 92) “thou hast been lifted up (*uddhṛtā*, but also “drawn up or out, broken off”) by the black boar with a hundred arms” (or, “as long as a hundred arms”?, cf. Mbh. 3, 272, 53 B.): this is a reference to Viṣṇu’s appearance as a boar to rescue the Earth from the depths of the ocean with his tusk or horn, but here the lump of clay appears to be identified with the earth. Then he takes with the two stanzas TĀ. 10, 1, 7 (MNU. 85–88) “arising from every joint ...” and “thou that extendest with a hundred ...” (see above) *ḍurvā* grass and places it with TĀ. 10, 1, 8 (MNU. 4, 6 or 93) “O clay, kill (destroy) my evil, the evil action that I have done (and its consequences)” on the lump of clay. The *ḍurvā* is no doubt supposed to contribute to the fulfilment of this wish. The text continues to state that the clay is to be thrown away in every direction, to be taken (again) and shown to the sun and thereupon is to be smeared on the limbs and parts of the performer’s body. It seems clear that the *ḍurvā* now is to add to the inherent qualities of the clay or, at least, to prevent it from losing them.

37. See, e.g., P.V. Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, III, Poona 1946, p. 358 ff.; Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 23 f.; 33; III, p. 229 f. and on lumps of earth taken from a furrow II, p. 30; 38.

38. See below on the rite described in BGŚ. 5, 4, 1.

39. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 140 f.

The simile in ṚV. 10, 134, 5 “just as the fibres of the *dūrṅā* grass (fall off), the envy (hatred) must go away from us” – “the joints of the *dūrṅā* stalks fall off as often (or, as manifoldly) as they shoot up” (Sāyaṇa) – may help us to understand places such as TĀ. 10, 1, 7 (MNU. 84) beseeching the plant to take away all evil from the person speaking and addressing it as a remover of bad dreams (*duḥsvapnanāśinī*, foreboding evil, causing pollution, and regarded as not essentially different from wicked thoughts or evil devices)<sup>40</sup>. This stanza forms part of a passage in which some other characteristic properties of this grass are explicitly mentioned and emphasized with a view to making them a means of furthering a person’s hopes and interests. These mantras – and many following ones – are to be recited in a low voice during a ritual ablution (*snānavidhimantrāḥ*)<sup>41</sup>. The stanza 83–88 – which constitute three mantras – are to consecrate the *dūrṅā* grass, which the person who performs this ceremony has to hold in his hand as long as he is engaged in it. The first half of stanza 83–84<sup>42</sup> praises the *dūrṅā*, that is, states some of its important characteristics and excellencies with the intention of confirming them (in the literal sense) and consolidating the addressee’s power: “the goddess (who is) the most excellent among a thousand (other plants, or beings)” – this number is often regarded as expressing the idea of *sarvam*, totality, see e.g. ŚB. 4, 6, 1, 15<sup>43</sup> – “with a hundred roots, with a hundred sprouts” – often used as a round number (e.g. ĀpŚ. 19, 21, 1; 20, 4, 6; 21, 17, 10; 22, 12, 5), a hundred also characterizes a state of completeness, an ideal duration etc. in the human sphere or phenomenal world (e.g. *śalāyus* “attaining the age of a hundred years”).

The second mantra, “arising from every joint of thy stalk, from every knot, thus with a thousand, O *dūrṅā*, and with a hundred do thou extend (*pratantu*) us” – notice the repetition of the numbers thousand and hundred – is either at full length or in part often mentioned or quoted in the *saṃhitās* and other works of the Yajurveda. Most occurrences relate to the placing of one of the “bricks” (*iṣṭakā*) that are used<sup>44</sup> in building the first layer of the great fireplace (*agnicayana*), viz. the *dūrṅā* “brick” which consists of *dūrṅā* grass<sup>45</sup>. This grass should have its roots and tops and be placed on the naturally perforated (*svayamātrṇṇā*) “brick”<sup>46</sup> in such a manner that its front part reaches the ground (its roots lying on the *svayamātrṇṇā*). Thus KŚ. 17, 4, 18, quoting the stanza (VS. 13, 20 and 21<sup>47</sup>). See also ĀpŚ. 16, 24, 1 stating that the grass should be green and be held fast by the plot on which it has grown<sup>48</sup>

40. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 485, s.v.

41. Compare, e.g., Manu 6, 24. See also J. Varenne, La Mahā Nārāyaṇa Upaniṣad, I, Paris 1960, p. 35; 149.

42. Varenne, op. cit., p. 36 n. 1 is mistaken in saying that this mantra does not occur elsewhere; see p. 114 above.

43. See J. Gonda, in Ind. Linguistics 16 (1955), p. 53 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 495 ff.).

44. For an enumeration see ŚB. 10, 4, 3, 14; 10, 5, 5, 10.

45. For the “bricks” which are not made of clay see ĀpŚ. 16, 13, 10 and HŚ. 11, 5, 21 speaking of *dūrṅāstamba*. See also Staal, Agni, p. 395; 423.

46. See A.K. Coomaraswamy, Svayamātrṇṇā: Janua Coeli, in Zalmoxis 2 (1939), p. 3 ff.; C. Malamoud, La brique percée, Nouvelle Revue de psychanalyse, 11 (1975), p. 205 ff.

47. As to VS. 13, 21 (MNU. 87 f.) see below.

48. As to the reading of the text see Caland, Śr. Āpast. III, p. 48 (VaikhŚ., l.c., reads also: *yathāsyopahitasya svayamātrṇṇām agram prāpṇuyāt tathā*).

(for the mantra see TS. 4, 2, 9, 2 c); likewise VaikhŚ. 18, 17: 274, 1; briefly BŚ. 10, 32: 29, 18; MŚ. 6, 1, 7, 14 informs us that the officiant places a clod of earth mixed with *dūrvā* so that the *dūrvā* blades reach up to the *svayamātrṇṇā* 'brick'; similarly VāŚ. 2, 1, 6, 24. According to the explanation given in TS. 5, 2, 8, 3 the 'brick' of *dūrvā* is put down to support the animals, because they do not find pleasure in want of pasturage (*āyava*). "One places it with two stanzas, for establishing it firmly" (*pratiṣṭhityai*; see also ŚB. 5, 2, 8, 3). As to the mantra: one says "arising from every joint" because it is firmly established with every joint of its stalk; the reference to a thousand is meant to obtain Prajāpati (i.e. to come into contact with him and to win his favour) because Prajāpati is characterized by a thousand, (because this is Prajāpati's number; both Prajāpati and this number represent the idea of Totality<sup>49</sup>). MS. 3, 2, 6: 24, 19 explaining the use of the mantra (2, 7, 15: 98, 13, followed by TS. 4, 2, 9 2 d) observes that the *dūrvēṣṭakā* is deposited in order to establish the useful plants firmly, that the "bricks" (*iṣṭakāḥ*) represent the cattle, that cattle do not like want of pasture and that by depositing this "brick" one makes so to say an *āyatana*, i.e. an "own resort, regular foothold, natural station or habitat"<sup>50</sup> for the cattle. KS. 20, 6: 24, 19 (for the mantra see 16, 16: 239, 13) observes in addition that Agni is a *paśu* (a domestic animal), that the *āyatana* is made for the satisfaction of these animals (*paśunām dhṛtyai*), that the one who knowing that the *pāda* of the stanza containing the words "a thousand ..." is homologous to (corresponds to or passes for) Prajāpati acquires well-being of (his) cattle a thousandfold. KapS. 31, 8: 155, 16 likewise.

ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 10 ff., explaining the rite at great length, states that the *dūrvā* "brick" is (i.e. represents) cattle (because it is the cause of their prosperity)<sup>51</sup>, and that by laying it on the preceding brick (the *svayamātrṇṇā* which represents the earth) one endows that with cattle, so that one places cattle on the earth<sup>52</sup>, and establishes the patron firmly in (the possession of) cattle. The text continues to inform us that when Prajāpati was disjoined the hair on his body became the (useful) plants – in JB. 2, 267 it becomes the *dūrvā* – and his vital breath or vital power (*prāṇa*) which left him became the *dūrvā* which "is" also the nobility (the ruling power, *kṣātra*). When one lays down the *dūrvā* "brick" one imitates the gods who restoring Prajāpati put the *prāṇa* into him. It should be with root and top, for completeness' sake. It should touch the ground with its tops for the plants spring up on the earth and grow along her (§ 11–13). The comm. on VS. 13, 20, which is quoted in ŚB. § 14, aptly observe that the last quarter of this stanza is a prayer for many sons, grandsons etc.

Two more brāhmaṇa places are worth mentioning. In ŚB. 7, 5, 1, 38 it is stated

49. See above, and cf. also TS. 5, 4, 2, 4; 5, 4, 7, 2; 7, 1, 5, 3.

50. See J. Gonda, *Āyatana*, in *Adyar Libr. Bull.* 33 (1969), p. 1 ff. (esp. p. 9 f.) (= S.S. II, p. 186 f.).

51. The text alludes to ŚB. 6, 2, 3, 2, where the cattle 'brick' (*paśviṣṭakā*) is said to be the same as the *dūrvā* 'brick'; because Agni approached with (the) cattle ('brick') immediately after the *svayamātrṇṇā* which represents the earth (6, 2, 3, 1) had been laid on, the *dūrvā* 'brick' is put down so as not to be separated from the *svayamātrṇṇā* 'brick'; hence also plants, cattle and fire are not separated from the earth. Similarly, ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 13.

52. *paśupuṣṭiśādhanaiva dūrvāṇām api paśuvāt tadupadhāne paśunām evopadhānam kṛtam* (comm.).



that the *dūrvā* “brick” is (also) the food for the sanctified or consecrated animal (lit. for the animal that has been duly prepared and made fit for a ritual purpose, *paśoh saṃskṛtasya*<sup>53</sup>). The comm., observing that this animal is Agni, who has the form of cattle, states that the text comes to the conclusion that up to the present day cattle satisfied with the food they have taken, viz. *tṛṇa* and so on, have in this world the same outward form as this part of the first layer of the great fireplace.

In ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 20 both the *svayamātr̥ṇṇā* and the *dūrvā* are homologized to “vital breath” (*prāṇa*) and the *dviyajus* brick that is put down after the *dūrvā* is said to represent the patron (cf. also § 16), who is also represented by the gold man who has been placed earlier, the *dviyajus* made of clay being his human body, the gold man his divine body free from (premature) death<sup>54</sup> (§ 17). By placing these three bricks in close proximity one brings about a connexion between the patron’s two bodies by means of the *prāṇa*: another instance of the multiple function of a ritual entity (*in casu* the *dūrvā*), of the complicated character of many homologations and of the ingenuity of the ritualists.

The recitation of this mantra and the following one (TS. 4, 2, 9, 2 d) is in BhG. 3, 11: 78, 6; HG. 2, 20, 10 “thou that extendest with a hundred, that arisest with a thousand, thee, O goddess, O brick, we would like to worship with an oblation” and ĀgnG. 1, 2, 2: 16, 16 (also BG. 3, 9, 11) prescribed to those who perform the ceremonious conclusion of a term of study (*utsarga, utsarjana, visarjana*). Some of the relative rites are the planting of *dūrvā* (plural), consecrated by these two mantras, at the bank or shore of water, the stirring up of waves in the water and a race in an easterly or northerly direction until they lose their breath. Since these three rites are, in contrast to many others, not repeated when one has finished the study of the whole Veda (§ 13), they are, at the end of the ceremony, without doubt intended to make a resumption of the study after an interruption possible. Indeed all three are characterized by a form of movement suggesting the continuation (resumption) of the usual activity. Races were believed to set power in motion, to “renew the world” etc.<sup>55</sup>. The planting of a tree – and of grass, as a substitute – is in itself an act of renewing and as such one of the procedures known as suggestive analogy, the setting of an example that encouraged imitation<sup>56</sup>.

The first stanza (TS. 4, 2, 9, 2 c) is in later works used to accompany oblations (rice, but also perfumes etc.) to the planet Rāhu; on that occasion the fuel for the sacrificial fire should consist of *dūrvā* (Yājñ. 1, 298 ff.)<sup>57</sup>.

The second *pāda* of the first stanza “arising from every joint ...” is, no doubt as a reminiscence of the above mantra, in an interesting way combined with “piece

53. Cf. Gonda, *Savayajñas*, p. 221 f.; 235 f.; *Vedic ritual*, p. 364 etc.

54. For gold and *amṛtam* see, e.g., ŚB. 5, 2, 1, 20; 5, 3, 5, 15; 12, 8, 1, 22 etc.; M. Eliade, *Förgerons et alchimistes*, Paris 1956, p. 55 etc.

55. See Gonda, *Aspects of early Viṣṇuism*, p. 46 f. (with references).

56. Remember the customary planting of trees – especially of evergreen pines and cypresses that are deemed to be fuller of vitality than others – on graves and the belief that, if a sapling planted after the birth of a child flourishes, the child will prosper (J.G. Frazer, *The golden bough*, abr. ed., London 1957, p. 892 f.).

57. See p. 51 and P.V. Kane, *History of dharmasāstra*, V, p. 751.

by piece thou cometh into existence” (which is not used in another rite) as well as “be, O house, auspicious to us” and employed in a rite that is to be performed by a teacher and his students (ŚB. 6, 6, 9). Having worshipped the Sun, they draw water out of a vessel used for expiation (*śanti*), pour it out on the ground and (the teacher) takes a part of a *dūrvā* stalk<sup>58</sup> out of that vessel, puts it on his head with this mantra and makes water offerings to Agni, Vāyu and other gods.

The same use of *dūrvā* occurs in the bathing rite described in AVPar. 42. The person who wishes to bathe should, among other things, hold *kuśa* in his hand, collect clay with AVŚ. 12, 1, 35, touch himself with lumps of clay with the three stanzas 12, 1, 23–25, place *dūrvā* on his head with the *sūkta* 12, 7: “... the curse-effacing plant has washed away from me all curses, as water does filth; ... protect us on all sides; ... let the curse go to the curser ...” and thereupon have himself anointed with cowdung to the accompaniment of st. 8, in which this dung is requested to push away disease and sorrow from the person speaking. Since AVŚ. 12, 7 is at Kauś. 26, 35 used in connexion with the binding on of an amulet consisting in barley, the *dūrvā* may probably be regarded as an amuletic charm for protection against evil.

As to the placing of *dūrvā* on a person’s head this rite occurs also in AVPar. 4, 1, describing the ritual of the morning blessing of each article of the king’s equipment by the *purohita*, when the former is putting them on. The passage 16 f. reads: “after having laid *dūrvā* and so on on the (ruler’s) head the priest mutters the mantra AVŚ. 6, 40, 1 over him: “Let safety (*abhayam*), O heaven and earth, be here for us”. Thereupon the king bows respectfully to the brahmins present and says: “By your favour I obtain appeasement of evil””. Those present say “So be it” and the king leaves. – At the end of the lustration performed for a king under the *nakṣatra* Puṣya (5, 5, 6) the *purohita* puts *dūrvā* (notice that this grass occupies the first place: the other articles are no doubt implicitly referred to by the “and so on” in 4, 1, 16), white mustard (which is used for eliminatory and protective purposes), butter, *śamī* wood, rice, barley and (auspicious) white flowers on the head of the ruler. This rite, performed at the end of the ceremony, creates the impression of being a sort of blessing or fortification comparable to the placing of a garland – another representative of the power of green or flowering plants – worn on the head of the youth who has finished his studentship (ĀpG. 12, 11; GG. 3, 4, 25), comparable also to unction rites, the imposition of hands customary on such occasions in other religions<sup>59</sup>.

From the mantra with which the *arghya* water that is offered to Vināyaka<sup>60</sup> and contains *dūrvā*, unhusked barley-corns and flowers is consecrated it appears that this fluid was regarded as auspicious, most auspicious, free from evil influences (*śāntāḥ*, like the other adjectives followed by the superlative), pure, propitious, fit for sacri-

58. Or parts (“joints, i.e. portions from one knot to another”) if the word is used as a collective noun and the teacher and his pupils are meant.

59. For particulars see, e.g., F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 236 ff.

60. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 438 f.

fit, agreeable, freeing from (untimely) death, (and also, without superlatives) fit for washing the feet, fit for a respectful reception<sup>61</sup>, fit to be worshipped, worthy of being used for sprinkling and inauguration, fit for being sipped, and for cleaning (BGŚ. 3, 10, 3)<sup>62</sup>.

Water in which are portions of *dūrvā* stalks is used when before the beginning of their study the students put their hands into the vessel used for appeasement or expiation (*śāntipātra*) which contains this water (ŚG. 6, 3, 7). When they are tired one of them should see to it that this vessel is not empty (§ 8). This rite appears to be a variant of the custom to hold grass in the hand for protecting the person concerned against evil influences and preventing him from becoming ritually impure. That is also why the vessel should not become empty – the auspicious property inheres in the water with the grass – and why the study should not begin before the hands of the students have ceased to drip (if this is the sense of *apinvamānaih* “not overflowing”)<sup>63</sup>.

When the consecration of a king is carried out according to the *sava* ritual described in ĀpŚ. 22, 28 and HŚ. 23, 4 he has to sit down on the hide of a tiger; thereupon his *purohita* pours out on him water in which have been put green stalks or blades of *dūrvā* (Āp. § 13). In the accompanying mantras (TB. 2, 7, 15, 4 f.) it is stated that this liquid represents the water, mixed with milk, of the three provinces of the universe, and that he sprinkles the ruler with the brightness (*ruc*) and brilliant energy and prestige (*varcas*) of all these waters.

Mention of water containing green blades of *dūrvā* is also made in connexion with the remains of *ekadhanā* water: ĀpŚ. 13, 17, 9; VaikhŚ. 16, 22: 232, 17<sup>64</sup>.

Whereas in performing the standard form of a soma ceremony the *adhvaryu* initiates<sup>65</sup> the *pr̥ṣṭhastotra* (or *mahendrastotra*, the first hymn of praise after the libation for Mahendra<sup>66</sup> – Indra’s name after he had slain Vṛṣṭra (ŚB. 4, 3, 3, 17) – ) by giving two blades of *darbha* with which he had touched the vessel containing this portion of soma, Indra’s special libation (ŚB. 5, 1, 3, 4 etc.), to the *prastotar*, the use of water in which *dūrvā* has been placed is prescribed instead, when the rites of the sixth day of a soma ceremony of twelve days’ duration are being performed (ĀpŚ. 21, 8, 4; HŚ. 16, 3, 39); cf. LŚ. 3, 6, 7; see also BŚ. 16, 4: 250, 7).

For the *sarpabali*, a propitiation of the snakes, food is cooked in the proximity of water or in front of an ant-hill; after having sprinkled fragrant water and *dūrvā*-water (water in which blades of *dūrvā* have been put) and scattered bright-coloured

61. In Lakṣmī-Tantra 37, 30 white mustard seed, sesame seed, *dūrvā*, barley and white rice-grains mixed with water, milk and fruits are the ingredients of the *arghya*.

62. In a Hinduist rite described, e.g., in LiPur. II, 22, 23 ff. a copper vessel is filled, not only with scented water mixed with red sandal paste, red flower, *kuśa* grass and rice grains but also with cow’s urine, *dūrvā* grass and *apāmārga* (the plant which “wipes off”).

63. According to the comm. the teacher moistens his own hands in the vessel (*śāntipātre*), brings thereupon the wet hands of his students together and covers the vessel with his own hands and theirs.

64. See p. 26.

65. For this rite see p. 60 f. above.

66. See Caland and Henry, *L’agniṣṭoma*, p. 306 (and, e.g., ĀpŚ. 13, 8, 4 f.; LŚ. 2, 9, 7; KŚ. 10, 3, 11 (the comm. speaking of two blades of *tr̥ṇa*)).

flowers one bakes flour of barley, rice, or millet with butter or juice of the sugarcane, and so on (BG. 3, 10, 1 ff.). Fragrant objects and flowers are scattered for purificatory purposes (see, e.g., RgVidh. 4, 26, 1) and for creating a saintly or pure sphere or condition<sup>67</sup>.

The combination of *dūrvā* and other grass is rare, if some cases of simultaneous use of *dūrvā* and *kuśa* or *darbha* are left out of consideration<sup>68</sup>. With regard to the ceremonial area set apart for the performance of the *pravargya* ritual<sup>69</sup> Baudhāyana informs us (9, 1: 265, 15) that, "having turned (the soil) of the northern section of the *sālā* (the sacrificial shed) on the east with the wooden sword and having sprinkled it, he scatters sand (gravel). He makes of it a round mound. He makes it beautiful (and hence auspicious) by means of sand (gravel). After having covered it with young *kuśa* sprouts and bunches of *dūrvā* (*dūrvāgranthibhiḥ*, which cannot mean "knots, joints or nodes of *kuśa*", but rather denotes clusters of "branches" given off from their underground or surface stems), they fence it off and make a door giving to the north". The same description is found at the beginning of the *agnicayana* ritual, viz. in BŚ. 10, 1: 1, 13. Among the objects buried under the first layer of the great fireplace are bunches of *darbha* and *dūrvā*, milk, ghee, curds mixed with honey etc.<sup>70</sup>. In VāG. 14, 6 *dūrvā* and *kuśa* are among the objects that are to lie ready for a wedding.

When the third (afternoon) service of a soma sacrifice draws to a close one cleans the vessels used which now are empty, fills them with water and arranges them north of the *āhavanīya*. In each of them one throws three *dūrvāgranthis* (see above)<sup>71</sup> and one bunch of *darbha* (BŚ. 8, 15: 256, 15).

Mention may be made here also of the five butter oblations made on a bunch of fresh *darbha* grass with roots which has been placed in a large hole immediately to the north of the centre (cf. ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 3) of the site of the *āhavanīya* (*agnicayana* ritual, cf. BŚ. 10, 24 – the *adhvaryu* had asked for these requisites, two definite bricks, a pot of water, clarified butter etc. in 10, 23: 21, 20 – ĀpŚ. 16, 17, 7); the mantras recited are TS. 5, 6, 4, 1<sup>72</sup>. Immediately after this the *adhvaryu* puts *dūrvā* in the hole, to the north of the *darbha* with AV. 6, 106, 1 " ... let flowery *dūrvāḥ* grow" (see above)<sup>73</sup>. As we have seen earlier, *darbha* represents food (cf. ŚB. 7, 2, 3, 2), the ghee which is offered is the vital sap of the universe (ibidem, 4), and the rapidly growing perennial *dūrvā*, obviously taking the place of all the kinds of plants to be sown according to ŚB. 7, 2, 4, 13 f. – where they are said to represent all food which

67. E. Lohmeyer, Vom göttlichen Wohlgeruch, Sitz. Ber. Heidelberg Acad. 1919, 9; Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 122.

68. See, e.g., also LiPur. II, 22, 25 f.

69. For particulars see J.A.B. van Buitenen, The *pravargya*, Poona 1968, p. 13.

70. I refer to Staal, Agni, p. 395.

71. Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 381 speak of "brins (stalks, blades) frais de *dūrvā*".

72. I refer to Staal, Agni, p. 387 f. and Keith, Veda of the Black Yajus School, p. 457.

73. BŚ. 10, 24: 23, 10 prescribes a somewhat modified form of the atharvanic version of RV. 10, 142, 8 (AVŚ. 6, 106, 1) when the *dūrvā* brick is placed (see 22, 5: 124, 7). According to the latter place there existed a difference of opinion with regard to this point; is the meaning of this statement: "he should place it with *dūrvā*" or " ... the *dūrvā*" (Baudhāyana), or: "*dūrvā* consisting of a mantra" (Śāliki). See also VaikhŚ. 18, 15: 267, 6.

is placed in the patron of the sacrifice – is to promote by means of prefigurative analogy the prosperous progress and success of the undertaking.

The one who has the rite with propitiatory water (*udakasānti*) BGŚ. 1, 14<sup>74</sup> performed – which until the present day is often performed on the occasion of auspicious rites (such as marriage, establishment of the Vedic fires), portents etc. – should make an even number<sup>75</sup> of brahmins wash well their hands and feet, sip water, sit down etc., should smear with cowdung a four-cornered sacrificial place (*sthaṇḍila*), sit down on *darbha* grasses facing east, hold *darbha* and (or?) *dūrvā* grasses and have a *pavitra* (two blades of *kuśa*) in his hand ..., sprinkle the *sthaṇḍila* and spread over it *dūrvā* and *darbha* grasses ..., cover it with flowers and place the sacred vessel (*brahmapātra*) on them. – On the small *sthaṇḍila* made for the *pratisarabandha* ceremony (the tying on of an amulet-string) one strews *darbha* with the tops eastward, places a jar on it, fills this with water, scatters *dūrvā*, unhusked barley and fruit in it, worships it with incense etc. and covers it with *dūrvā* and (or) *darbha* (BGŚ. 1, 15, 5). – In the *ṛtusānti* (BGŚ. 5, 3, 5) blades of *darbha*, *dūrvā* etc. (*darbhair dūrvādinā*) are a means of covering, making other requisites fit for their specific use (*alamkṛtya*) and surrounding them.

74. Translated by Kane, History of dharmaśāstra, V, p. 783 ff.

75. Even numbers are auspicious (Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 29 f.); the number four is often to correspond with the regions of the universe, of which the sacrificial place is the imago (see e.g. M. Eliade, The sacred and the profane, New York 1959, p. 250, s.v. imago mundi). Moreover, the fourth denotes, in a classification, often the idea of totality.



## VII

### Muñja

*Muñja*<sup>1</sup>, botanically known as *saccharum arundinaceum* Retz. or *saccharum ciliare* Anderss., also *saccharum muñja* Roxb., is a grass of luxuriant growth attaining to a height of ten feet. The word occurs already in an enumeration of kinds of grass etc. in RV. 1, 191, 3<sup>2</sup> (AVP. 9, 6, 7). It was no doubt for various purposes employed in ordinary life, for instance, as material for making cords, strings, and brooms<sup>3</sup>, and, on account of its hollowness (ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 26), as a primitive catheter: AVŚ. 1, 2, 4 where it is described as standing between the disease on one hand and the flow (in all probability, of urine, see AVŚ. 1, 3 and Kauś. 25, 10; 15<sup>4</sup>) on the other. It is, moreover, interestingly compared to *tejana* (probably bamboo) which (as a representative of the *axis mundi*) stands between heaven and earth and through which passage from one cosmic region to another is made possible. In AVP. 20, 33, 6 ab which is for the rest almost identical with AVŚ. 1, 2, 4 ab it is the *muñja* that is standing between heaven and earth, ostensibly as the model for, or a guarantor of, the stability of the whole world of the living (*viśvam bhuvanam*) in pāda c. Anyhow, its relative strength and hollowness seem to have excited the attention and imagination of these authors.

Another characteristic gave rise to a popular simile: ŚB. 4, 3, 3, 16 “the gods plucked him out of all evil, even as one might pluck out a reed (*iṣīkā*, the stem, also used as an arrow) from its sheath (*muñja*)”; 5, 1, 2, 18<sup>5</sup>; 12, 9, 2, 7; JB. 2, 134 (together with the simile of the snake that frees himself from his skin (cf. PrU. 5, 5; cf. BĀU. 4, 4, 7); KB. 18, 7 (18, 5, 20); GB. 2, 4, 6; KaU. 6, 17).

In Kauś. 33, 1 ff. *muñja* grass is used as a prognostic of successful childbirth. The reeds of four *muñja* stems are, above the head of a pregnant woman, separated (*vibr̥hati*) from their stems, so that the sheaths are turned towards the east and the reeds (*iṣīkāḥ*) towards the west; if the stems are broken, there will be danger (in the opposite case the confinement will be successful). The opinion that the details of this rite

1. The origin of the word is unknown; see Mayrhofer, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, II, p. 650.

2. See p. 58.

3. See below.

4. Compare the notes in Whitney and Lanman, *Ath. Samh.*, p. 3 (on AVŚ. 1, 2, 4 and 1, 3) and Caland's note on Kauś. 25, 15.

5. See the comm.: *yathā muñjatṛṇād iṣīkāṃ madhyavarti tṛṇaṃ vivr̥het pṛthakkuryāt*; Eggeling's translation (Śat. Br., III, p. 11) is incorrect.

have nothing to do with the text of AVŚ. 1, 11, which is to be recited<sup>6</sup>, is not wholly correct: for the number four see AVŚ. 1, 11, 2 mentioning the four directions of sky and earth which represent a form of completeness. According to TS. 2, 5, 7, 3 impregnation takes place in front (towards the east), birth backwards (towards the west). Between these moments the gods produced a complete embryo (st. 2). Caland<sup>7</sup> drew already attention to the parallelism between the separating of the reed from the sheath and the process of giving birth; notice the many verbs with the prefix *vi* "apart, asunder" in st. 1 d; 2 d; 3 a; 3 b; 5a; 5 b; 5 c; 5 d. Keśava explained this passage as a rite to be performed at the moment of the woman's delivery in order to achieve a successful birth; if the reeds are broken, the child in the womb will die.

The hollowness of the *muñja* and its being smoke-tinged inside led the author of ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 26 to associate this grass with the mythical theme of Agni's going away from the gods; on that occasion he entered into a *muñja* stalk, whence it is hollow and is, as it were, smoke-tinged inside; thus the *muñja* is Agni's womb. The sentence "the womb does not injure the embryo" is repeated in 6, 6, 1, 23 (likewise dealing with the *agnicayana*; see below). For *muñja* as a womb (*yoni*) see also ŚB. 6, 6, 2, 15.

That *muñja* is comparatively strong is more than once explicitly stated. See TS. 5, 1, 9, 5 where the author teaches his readers without delay how to derive profit from this fact: "he (the officiant) deposits *muñja* (on the fire-pan); *muñja* is *ūrj* (strength, vigour), he (thus) bestows *ūrj* upon him (the patron)". In 5, 1, 10, 5 the same effect is produced by using a sling made of *muñja* in order to suspend the fire-pan. In TB. 3, 8, 1, 1 the rope which is used to tie the sacrificial horse is said to be made of *muñja* which is *ūrj*, so that the patron obtains *ūrj*. By using or putting down *muñja* one transmits *ūrj* (KS. 19, 10: 11, 9; KapS. 30, 8: 145, 11); by using a loop made of a rope of *muñja* one surrounds or envelops a person with *ūrj* (KS. 19, 11: 12, 21; KapS. 31, 1: 147, 9).

In the long section on the girdle with which the patron of a soma sacrifice girds himself, ŚB. 3, 2, 1, 10 ff. this object<sup>8</sup> is said to represent (to be a source of) strength or vigour (*ūrj*, also forcing food), to be made of hemp (*śāñi bhavati*) in order to be soft, to be threefold (to consist of three components, *trivṛt*), because food, being cattle, is threefold (cf. 8, 5, 3, 3)<sup>9</sup>. It is intertwined with a shoot of *muñja* (*muñjavalsa*) "for the sake of chasing away the evil spirits, *śara* (a sort of reed, also used as arrows!) being a *vajra*. It is plaited after the manner of a braid of hair ...". However, the *muñja* would no doubt add to the solidity of the girdle. The *śara* reed with which *muñja* here so to say is identified is TS. 6, 1, 3, 3 ff. in connexion with the same girdle also stated to be *ūrj* and a *vajra*; there the sacrificer wins strength because

6. Whitney and Lanman, op. cit., p. 11.

7. Caland, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 108.

8. See, e.g., Gonda, R.I. I<sup>2</sup>, p. 119; Notes on AV. book 14, in IJ 8 (1964), p. 22 f. (= S.S. III, p. 22 f.); The Savayajñas, p. 133; Vedic ritual, p. 152 f.; Kane, Hist. Dharmasāstra, II, p. 411; Handw. des deutsch. Abergl. III, Berlin and Leipzig 1927 ff., 1210 ff.; M. Molé, Culte, mythe et cosmologie dans l'Iran ancien, Paris 1964, p. 411.

9. Cf. J. Gonda, Triads in the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1976, p. 236 s.v.; as to cattle, see p. 112.

of the girdle which consists of *śara* reed. ĀpŚ. 10, 9, 13 gives his followers the option between *śara* and *muñja*, but BhŚ. 10, 6, 10 prescribes *muñja*. For *muñja* as material for a girdle see also BG. 2, 5, 13; BhG. 1, 6: 6, 8 (student); GG. 2, 10, 10; 37; JG. 1, 12: 12, 10; ĀgnG. 1, 1, 1: 3, 5; ViS. 28, 37; 40; cf. also BDh. 1, 2, 13; GDh. 1, 15; VāDh. 2, 3; 2, 6 (the girdle in general); Manu, 2, 169.

As to the girdle of a brahmin youth who is being initiated, it should consist of *muñja* grass (ŚG. 2, 1, 15; PG. 2, 5, 21) because this is – of course on account of its hollowness – “identified” with a womb (*yoni*, e.g. ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 23) and the girdle is so to say the womb out of which the student is reborn<sup>10</sup>. However, this explanation, though attesting to the belief in the birth of a “new man”, looks like a reinterpretation. Covering with clothes (or new clothes) belongs, like unction, renaming and so on, to the basic pattern of passage rites. Those who by means of puberty rites are initiated into manhood should provide against the danger of attacks of magicians or evil powers or against other detrimental influences<sup>11</sup>. On the other hand, girdles are often meant, or believed, to afford this protection. Girdles made of grass that has been pulled out of the ground are, for instance, wound round babies in order to protect them against diseases<sup>12</sup>. This may have been a more original function of the girdle of the Indian youth.

That this characteristic of *muñja* was very well discerned and valued appears also from the use made of it in the ritual manuals and, no doubt, in some cases, also in daily life. When the patron of the *sautrāmaṇī* ceremony is consecrated, he has to sit down on a throne (*āsandī*)<sup>13</sup> the seat of which consists of plaited *muñja*-work, “for *muñja* is fit for sacrificial ritual” (ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 6). Similarly, but without this explanation, at the *punarabhiṣeka* ceremony (AiB. 8, 5, 3). See also MS. 2, 1, 4, 34 and BS. 10, 12: 11, 16; BhŚ. 10, 20, 8; ĀpŚ. 10, 29, 7; VaikhŚ. 12, 21: 151, 18 (*agni-ṣṭoma*); ŚŚ. 17, 2, 9 and ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 12 (*mahāvṛata*); ĀpŚ. 16, 10, 16 (*agnicayana*); BhŚ. 11, 5, 9 (*pravargya*). Although considerations of technical and practical expedience have no doubt contributed much to the preference for *muñja*, there is room for the supposition that the reputed *ūrj* of this grass was believed to benefit the one who was entitled to this seat. Remember what in ŚB. 3, 3, 4, 27 f. is said on the *udumbara* wood of which the *āsandī* is made: this fig-tree represents food and *ūrj* and it is used in order to make the patron obtain these. (See also 6, 7, 1, 13).

Occasionally, however, both motives, the ritual and the practical, are indicated. One has to take hold of the pan which contains the fire by means of two panholders made of *muñja* triply wound: as to their *bandhu* the text (ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 26) refers to 6, 3, 1, 26 f. They are smeared with clay, for which the author refers to 6, 3, 3, 1. “But”, he adds, “it (the clay) also serves to keep them (the panholders) from taking fire (*anatiḍāhāya*: the fire must be kept within bounds)”. Similarly, 6, 7, 1, 15.

10. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 117; see also Kane, Hist. of Dharmaśāstra, II, p. 280 f.

11. See, e.g., A. van Gennep, Les rites de passage, Paris 1909, passim; K. Birket-Smith, Geschichte der Kultur, Zürich 1946, p. 199.

12. See J. Hastings, Enc. of Rel. and Ethics, London 1908 ff., VII, p. 229.

13. On the *āsandī* see J. Auboyer, Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne, Paris 1949, p. 16 ff.

Or only the profane use is explicitly mentioned: the lump of clay (Agni) is tied up with a triple string of *muñja*<sup>14</sup> (the text refers to ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 27), “for with an implement for tying (*yoktra*) they fasten (tie up) what is serviceable (and is to be kept)” (6, 4, 3, 7)<sup>15</sup>.

One of the rites performed during the sacrifices of full and new moon is the girding of the patron’s wife<sup>16</sup>. Around her waist a yoke-halter (*yoktra*) made of *muñja* with a noose at one end is wound (BhŚ. 2, 5, 3; see also KŚ. 2, 7, 1), or at the option of those concerned a *muñja* rope or a yoke-halter (ĀpŚ. 2, 5, 4), or a yoke-halter (BŚ. 1, 12: 17, 5; ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 13, but KŚ. 2, 7, 1 states that it is a *mauñjayoktra*). This girding is to conceal the impure part of her body which is below the navel (ŚB.), but according to TB. 3, 3, 2 ff. it is to make her fit for participating in the sacrifice, and is an initiation into the vowed ritual observances (*vratopayana*)<sup>17</sup> as well as a means of securing the firmness (*dhṛti*) of the sacrifice. These motives are not mutually exclusive. Invoking the encouragement of Agni, the lord of the house, and the wives of the gods the wife prays for good and brave sons, for the preservation of her husband’s life and so on. Since every detail of the rite – the place where the wife is to be seated (TB. 2), the double or triple winding of the girdle (ĀpŚ. 6) – is significant, the material of which the girdle is made is certainly not unimportant.

Some texts (KŚ. 13, 2, 20 f.; ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 8 ff.; VārŚ. 3, 2, 5, 25) make mention of a musical instrument, called *bāṇa*, with a hundred strings of *muñja* – “man is of a hundred (years) of age, and of a hundredfold energy” (TS. 7, 5, 9, 2; PB. 5, 6, 13; thus “one secures a complete duration of life and energy” KS. 34, 5: 39, 10) – and a plectrum (*vādanam*) of *vetasa* reed; it is used at the *mahāvṛata* ceremony. In other references to this instrument of the harp class<sup>18</sup> the *muñja* does not occur (PB., l.c.; AiĀ. 5, 1, 4), but in JB. 2, 45 an *iṅkā* (see above) and a twig of *vetasa* reed are used as plectrum (see also ŚŚ. 17, 3, 11 *śareṅkā*). Since according to ŚŚ. 17, 3, 1 the body and the neck of this instrument are of *palāśa* (which represents *brahman*) or *udumbara* wood (which means strength etc.)<sup>19</sup> and the body is covered with a red ox-hide, the use of *muñja* was, I think, from the ritual point of view not indifferent.

Sometimes an author, without mentioning a motive for using this material, makes it nevertheless clear that *muñja* is to be preferred. For instance, the wooden implements used in piling up the *śmaśānaciti* should be made of *varāṇa* – which because of its name is expected to ward off (*vārāya*, ŚB. 13, 8, 4, 1) what is unwished

14. Also KŚ. 16, 3, 6. However, ĀpŚ. 16, 3, 7 gives the option between hemp, *muñja* and *arka*, an inauspicious plant (*calotropis gigantea*); *muñja* or *arka* VaikhŚ. 18, 1: 251, 8; MŚ. 6, 1, 1, 31.

15. Eggeling’s translation (Sat. Br. III, p. 222) “with a string they yoke the draught beast” is of course possible (cf. ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 13), but in this context the words have, I think, a general meaning.

16. See A. Hillebrandt, *Das altindische Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, Jena 1879, p. 59 f.

17. See also Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 152 f.; 461 f.

18. See especially E. te Nijenhuis, *Dattilam*, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1970, p. 77 f.; also W. Caland, *Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa*, Calcutta 1931, p. 88; A.K. Coomaraswamy, *The parts of the vīṇā*, JAOS 50 (1930), p. 244 ff.

19. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 109 f.

for —, and all cords should be made of *muñja*, unless different material is prescribed by a specific injunction (BhPit. 2, 4, 6 ff.).

That *muñja* because of its solidity made good material for a broom is self-evident, but the obligatory use of such an object in the *pravargya* ritual is in ŚB. 14, 2, 1, 36 motivated with another reference to the *bandhu* (see below) of this grass (6, 6, 1, 23). Before using it for its specific purpose one sweeps the *mahāvīra* pot in which the milk of the *pravargya* ritual is to be boiled clean with a broom of *muñja* grass: the pot, when heated, becomes glowing, the milk is poured into it and thereupon called *gharma* “hot drink” (14, 2, 1, 18 ff.). See also TĀ. 5, 4, 4; ĀpŚ. 15, 5, 17 ff.; 15, 7, 2; BhŚ. 11, 5, 21 and compare 11, 7, 4 (one should use a broom the ends of which are not cut); 11, 15, 2; 23; VādhŚ. 3, 100: 4; KŚ. 26, 2, 10; 26, 5, 15; cf. also MŚ. 4, 2, 2; BŚ. 9, 15: 287, 2.

Among the requisites for the *pravargya* ceremony are a halter or fastening rope (*abhidhānī*) of *muñja*, two bands or tethers of *muñja* and three forked cords (*visakhadā-māni*, BhŚ. 11, 5, 22), as well as two bunches of cut-off *muñja* the ends of which are not worn out (BhŚ. 23). See also ĀpŚ. 15, 5, 20 (the paragraphs 17 ff. enumerate a number of objects made of *muñja* to be used at the *pravargya*). With the *abhidhānī* and the two tethers the *gharma* cow is called up and bound (BhŚ. 11, 9, 4 f.; ĀpŚ. 15, 9, 3 f.); with the three forked cords a calf, a she-goat and a lamb are tethered to pegs (BhŚ. 11, 6, 13 f.; ĀpŚ. 15, 6, 13; 17); the two sets of cuttings are lighted (BhŚ. 11, 7, 7 f.; ĀpŚ. 15, 7, 3). See also VaikhŚ. 13, 7: 161, 1. Among the requisites for the same ceremony enumerated in VādhŚ. 3, 100 are six objects collectively denoted by the term *auśadhāḥ* “consisting, made of plants”. They are: the two brooms (see above), the fragments (*pralavāḥ*) of *muñja*, the halter or short rope (*abhidhānī*) of *muñja*, the two bonds known as *saṃdāna* and *niyojana*, by means of which the cow and the calf are bound. BŚ. 9, 5: 272, 11 has the latter bound with a rope of *muñja* (*mauñjena dāmnā*).

When one wishes to buy the *soma* required for an *agniṣṭoma* one should get ready, *inter alia*, two brooms made of *kuśa*, one broom made of *muñja* the ends of which are not cut off (cf. BhŚ. 11, 7, 4), a “rope-cord” (*rajjudāman*) and cuttings of *muñja* (BŚ. 9, 5: 271, 6).

On the authority of VaikhŚ. 12, 9: 139, 12 it may be assumed that the Vaikhānasas made the patron who had himself consecrated bind, with a cord made of hemp or *muñja*, the horn of a black antelope with three or five convolutions to the fringe of his garment<sup>20</sup>. That horn is the womb from which Indra was born and from which the patron, after becoming an embryo, will be born (ŚB. 3, 2, 1, 27 ff.).

A rope or cord made of *muñja* — which growing to the height of ten feet, makes among the various grasses good binding material — is also used in cases such as the following. Whereas TB. 3, 8, 3, 3 dealing with the rope with which the sacrificial horse is bound speaks of a *raśanā* “bridle, rope”, ĀpŚ. 20, 2, 7 wishes to add that it should consist of *darbha* or *muñja* (cf. 15, 2: 205, 9); VādhŚ. 3, 69: 173, 4 mentions

20. On this custom see Caland, Śr. Āp. II, p. 144 (on ĀpŚr. 10, 9, 17). For the black antelope, whose skin is believed to represent *brahman* Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 105 f.; for hemp, that is used in magic, *ibidem*, p. 121 and Caland, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 190, s.v. Hanf.



a halter (*asvābhidhānī*) made of *muñja* for firmness (*sthemne*). The triple halters with which the animals are fastened that go in search of Agni are composed of *muñja*, in order to guard Agni against injury (ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 26). The besom with which this horse is pushed out of the water (cf. ĀpŚ. 20, 3, 16 ff.) is according to BŚ. 15, 6: 210, 7 made of cane – which represents a complete duration of life that now is put into the patron (TB. 3, 8, 4, 3) – with two cords of *muñja*. The swing of *udumbara* wood on which the *hotar* sits down on the occasion of the *mahāvratā* ceremony is suspended by means of a rope that consists of *muñja* (ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 13); the author of ŚŚ. 17, 2, 1 explicitly observes that it must be strong (*dr̥dhe*) and consist of three threads (*triguṇe*<sup>21</sup>; cf. AiĀ. 5, 1, 3, where the ropes are made of *darbha*). The person who is to bear firepans with fire needs two ropes of *muñja* or *kuśa* grass (BŚ. 10, 1: 1, 2; see also VārŚ. 2, 1, 3, 4 f.). – If there is no *muñja*, the girdle of a brahmin youth may be composed of *kuśa* (PG. 2, 5, 24). – Notice also the words of “you are tying up the mouth, the jaw of the rat by means of *muñja*” (in order to protect the crops, AVP. 19, 32, 12).

Strainers may, on the other hand, be made of *muñja* or *darbha* (BhŚ. 11, 5, 26, mentioning a fastening rope, tethers and cords made of it, *agniṣṭoma*); ŚŚ. 17, 2, 1; 9; KŚ. 26, 2, 7; VaikhŚ. 13, 7: 161, 3 *pravargya*; see also ĀpŚ. 15, 5, 20).

Intelligibly enough, strong and long ropes of three-stranded *muñja* grass are required in performing the *mahāvratā* (ŚŚ. 17, 2, 1 ff.). Mention of a “threefold” (*trivṛt*) string or cord is also made at KŚ. 16, 5, 2 (cf. ŚB. 6, 7, 1, 12 ff.) in connexion with the “netting” (*śikya*, a kind of swing or loop suspended from either end of a pole or yoke to carry a load) by means of which Agni, the fire, is carried in the fire-pan (*agnicayana*) – the *śikya* is furnished with six strings, because there are six regions – and with the seat (*āsandī*) of the firepan. For the *bandhu* “the relation or connexion with the unseen, the correspondence between the mundane phenomena and the eternal immutable transcendent reality”<sup>22</sup> the author of the ŚB. refers to the above passage. Similarly, at ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 3 in connexion with the cordage of a plough (*agnicayana*) which had also to be strong and solid (see also KŚ. 17, 2, 9; BŚ. 10, 12: 12, 2; with the cord used at the *pravargya* KŚ. 26, 2, 7). Round the place of the funeral pile (*śmaśānaciti*) one should stretch three times a three-stranded cord of *muñja* or of the coarse *balbaja* (BhPit. 2, 2, 10). At ĀpŚ. 16, 10, 8 the strap or sling by means of which the *ukhā* is borne consists of six or twelve strands.

References to cuttings of *muñja* for the purpose of purification are rare. According to BS. 9, 14: 286, 5 the *adhvaryu* should, towards the end of the *pravargya* ceremony, make one mound, place on it a piece of gold, cover it with the hide of a black antelope, the neck of which is turned eastward and the hairs of which are turned upwards; thereupon he scatters the *rauhīṇa* cakes (particular sacrificial cakes used in the *pravargya*) on it, purifies it with cuttings (*pralavāḥ*) of *muñja* grasses and scatters it with sand<sup>23</sup>. After having filled the utilized *mahāvīra* pot with sour milk mixed

21. On *triguṇa* see Gonda, Triads in the Veda, p. 206 ff. Cords consisting of three threads or strings are also prescribed in later ritual.

22. See J. Gonda, Bandhu in the brāhmaṇas, Adyar Libr. Bull. 1, p. 29 (= S.S., II, p. 400 ff.).

23. For sand, believed to be the ashes or seed of Agni (ŚB. 7, 1, 1, 9 f.) see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 137 etc.

with honey he deposits it in the front (eastern) side of this prepared place. For a similar combination of ritual acts see BŚ. 9, 16: 288, 16.

We may be certain that this grass was an ordinary device for kindling fire. From MŚ. 1, 5, 3, 1 and 6, 1, 3, 23 it appears that it was rightly reckoned highly inflammable (*kṣiprāgni*). It seems therefore probable that the ritualists adopted and recommended the use of *muñja* because of its effectiveness. Abortive attempts and delay in performing ritual tasks were undesirable. The procedure is described in BhŚ. 11, 3, 16; ĀpŚ. 15, 4, 2 (dealing with the burning of substances by means of which the *mahāvira* pot of the *pravargya* ritual would turn red): one lights *muñja* on the *gārhapatya* fire<sup>24</sup> and then burns by means of it these substances in a particular way with formulae from TĀ. 4, 3, 2. But this does not exclude the existence of a simultaneous – in their eyes principal, in our opinion probably secondary – ritual reason for using this grass. At a given moment, the *adhvaryu* performing the *pravargya* rites<sup>25</sup> collects a number of *muñja* sprouts, holding a bunch in each hand and lights the tops of the sprouts which he is holding in his right hand at the *gārhapatya* fire and then in a complicated manner the other three ends of these sets of grass. Being kindled on both sides these are thrown or placed (BhŚ. 11, 7, 11) on a mound. On this mound (*pravṛñjanīye khare*, BŚ. 9, 6: 274, 8) the *mahāvira* pot is placed on the fire of the burning grass (*pravṛṇakti*<sup>26</sup>, ŚB. 14, 1, 3, 15; see also BhŚ. 11, 7, 7 ff., where *pratiṣṭhāpayati*; ĀpŚ. 15, 7, 3; BŚ. 9, 6: 274, 9; TĀ. 5, 4, 4). The author of ŚB., I. cit., adds the following motivation: “These plants grew up from the life-sap of the sacrifice that had its head cut off (cf. TS. 3, 2, 4, 1; ŚB. 6, 5, 2, 1; 14, 1, 2, 17); the officiant now supplies and completes it with that lifesap”<sup>27</sup>.

One year – or twelve, six, three days – before the beginning of the *agnicayana* ritual the patron should place the *ukhā*, i.e. the fire-pan which he will have to bear for that period, on the embers – so that he will win what they represent, viz. that which is to be – beseeching Mitra to heat it (TS. 5, 1, 9, 2; 4, 1, 9 e). According to BŚ. 10, 13; 13, 1 he strews balls of dung and putrid (dry) grass (*pūtilṛṇāni*) –

24. As to the merit gained by lighting *muñja* in this way see VādhŚ. 3, 9: Acta Or. 4, p. 10 f.

25. See J.A.B. van Buitenen, *The pravargya*, Poona 1968, p. 71 ff. and esp. p. 74.

26. Notice that the first meaning of this verb (*pravṛj-*) is “to pluck (break off, gather) and throw what has been plucked” (viz. the grass thrown round the fire, here called *barhis*, RV. 7, 2, 4; 7, 39, 2; in a transferred sense in RV. 1, 116, 24 of Rebha, who being tied (or covered with cords or strings) and pierced – verbs reminiscent of products of *muñja* grass, viz. strings and arrows – was thrown into the water but saved by the Aśvins); then the forms and derivatives of the verb appear to have been used also, in the same or a similar context, to indicate the throwing or placing of objects that have not been plucked. In VādhŚ. 3, 9: 10, 20 the (additional) fuel which the *adhvaryu* throws into a person's fire to kindle it (*upasamindhe*) is said to be a stream of *amṛta*, which is thrown (towards) him: *pravṛjyate*. The noun *pravṛñjana* denotes in ĀpŚ. 15, 18, 11; 16 “the placing in or on the fire of the *mahāvira* pot” and hence the “performance of the *pravargya* ritual” (see also BhŚ. 11, 19, 1; 6) and notice RV. 5, 30, 15, where the word *pravṛje* is used in connexion with the *gharma*, i.e. “the hot milk” or (and) “the vessel in which this milk is heated”. As stated above the mound upon which the grass is strewn, the pot placed and the rite performed is characterized as *pravṛñjanīya* (see also BŚ. 9, 5: 271, 16; 272, 1); so is the pot which is actually used in the rite (KŚ. 26, 7, 14); (as to the form and its meaning see (J. Wackernagel and) A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2, Göttingen 1954, p. 208 f.); the verb can be used in the sense of “performing the *pravargya*” (BhŚ. 11, 19, 2; KS. 37, 7: 88, 2 *pravargyah pravṛjyate*; ĀpŚ. 15, 12, 10; MŚ. 2, 2, 1, 14; 4, 1, 4). From these processes the *pravargya* ritual derives its name. (See also Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 15).

27. For the *pravargya* as the head of *makha*, the sacrifice see van Buitenen, op. cit., p. 16 ff.

which are to take fire<sup>28</sup> – into it and pours a spoonful of clarified butter. Then he places (*pravṛṇakti*) it in the embers in the proximity of the *āhavanīya*. ĀpŚ. 16, 9, 4 enjoins him to put it down there after having covered it with a “nest” (woven texture, *kuḷāya*; cf. KŚ. 16, 4, 31; BŚ. 10, 12: 12, 2; HŚ. 11, 3, 3) of hemp or *muñja* used as a tinder. As to this grass I quote ŚB. 6, 6, 1, 23: “It is covered with a layer of *muñja*, just for the purpose that it may blaze up ... This is done to avoid injury, for *muñja* is a womb and the womb does not injure the embryo ...; it is expected that Agni, when he is born, will be born from a womb” (see also 6, 6, 2, 15 f.). In case there is a layer of hemp the explanation in § 24, which may be omitted here, is applicable. Thereupon the pan is heated (ĀpŚ. § 5) and *krumuka* – a species of wood<sup>29</sup>, in TB. 1, 4, 7, 3 and KŚ. 16, 7, 6 said to be Agni’s dear body or manifestation (*tanū*); cf. also TS. 5, 1, 9, 5 – which has been smeared with ghee, and *muñja* are thrown into it (ĀpŚ. § 6), which are expected to take fire. This procedure is recommended to somebody desirous of prosperity (TS. 5, 1, 9, 4; ĀpŚ. § 7).

In BŚ. 2, 6: 42, 15 (see also 2, 12: 53, 7) dealing with the ceremonious preparation of the sacred fires (*agnyādheya*) a “nest” (*kuḷāya*)<sup>30</sup> of *muñja* is brought near with the mantra “that body of thine, that is possessed of authority and inaugurative power (*ojas*) that has entered the (useful) plants, that I make ready here”. In the *punarādheya* ritual the *muñjakulāya* is replaced by a *darbhakulāya* (BŚ. 3, 1: 69, 5), no doubt because of the propitiatory properties of *darbha*. – For a rite of atonement undertaken with the *muñjakulāya* etc. see BŚ. 29, 6: 377, 2 (also VaikhŚ. 21, 17: 333, 3; cf. ĀpŚ. 16, 9, 4).

Describing the production of new fire the author of MŚ. 1, 5, 3, 1 ff. states that the *adhvaryu* puts down fragments (*avalopa*) of *muñja* or other inflammable things behind the lines indicating the place of the *gārhapatya* fire<sup>31</sup>. On these he places towards the east two blades of *darbha* with unbroken tips (KŚ. 5, 1, 29 *kuṣataruṇau*) with “ye are the testicles” (TS. 1, 3, 7, 1 i; also 6, 3, 5, 2<sup>32</sup>; ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 12; ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 21 etc. in the same rite); on them the lower part (wood) of the firedrill, its tuft towards the north with “thou art Urvaśī (TS. 1, 3, 7, 1 k; also 6, 3, 5, 3; ĀpŚ. 13; ŚB. 22 etc.); and the upper part (wood), its procreative power at the bottom to the west with the ten-*hotar* formula (cf. ĀpŚ. 5, 10, 8<sup>33</sup>) – here Āp., ŚB. use the formula “thou art Purūravas – ...” (also ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 13); then the *udgātar* is requested to sing the *sāman* (based on) the stanza “the men (have generated) with the brightness (of the internal light and enlightenment<sup>34</sup>) the fire in the firedrill” (RV. 7, 1, 1; SV. 1, 72; 2, 723). In the two (woods), brought together, he produces (the fire) by drilling with “hence first was (Agni) Jātavedas born, from his own womb, and so on” (e.g. also ŚB. 7, 5, 1, 30). The sexual parallelism is perfectly

28. Cf. Staal, Agni, p. 318 n.

29. See Caland, Śr. Āp. III, p. 20.

30. Cf. Krick, Feuergründung, p. 157, n. 408.

31. For *lakṣaṇa* see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 232 ff.; Krick, Feuergründung, p. 61 etc.

32. Not “ye are the two male ones” (Keith).

33. This formula identifies ten objects connected with the human body with ten sacrificial entities.

34. See J. Gonda, The vision of the Vedic poets, The Hague 1963, p. 223.

clear (see also ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 22). For a similar description see KŚ. 5, 1, 27 ff. mentioning also Āyu, the son of Purūravas and Urvaśī<sup>35</sup>.

It is quite a question, whether the use which the persons speaking in AVP. 9, 7, 12 wish to make of *muñja* was also an everyday custom of the Aryans: "With the water that is within the *muñja* grasses, that is in the reeds (*naḍa*)<sup>36</sup>, in the sea, in the river, we extinguish the fire".

That the water – *udaka*, i.e. ordinary water<sup>37</sup> – and the liquid denoted by the compound *muñjanejanam* are, in RV. 1, 161, 8, inferior substitutes for *soma* is clear, but what exactly is the meaning of the latter word<sup>38?</sup>; is it slops (water used for cleaning with a *muñja* filter<sup>39</sup> or broom), or rather a kind of drink (or cattle-fodder?) that had been purified by throwing *muñja* into it<sup>40?</sup>

A person who suffers from headache, cough etc. should cover his head with a plaited basket made of *muñja* (*mauñjaprasna*) and (or) hold, among other things, such an object in his left hand; then go for a walk and wherever he is attacked by his illness deposit the *muñja* basket on the ground whilst muttering AVŚ. 1, 12. St. 2 of this *sūkta* expresses the wish to worship "the seizer who has seized his joints" and st. 3 is a prayer for release from headache and cough, enjoining the roaring or hissing (*śuśma*, of the illness) (to leave him and) to attach itself to the trees and mountains (Kauś. 26, 2 ff.). It would appear to me that the basket is expected to attract the originators of the disease which is normally conceived of materialistically, to grant the request for release from the disease and, after having been brought into contact with the ground, to transfer it to the trees and mountains<sup>41</sup>.

In Kauś. 32, 3 f., which describes a remedial rite expected to put an end to any disease, the magician is enjoined to wrap cords of *muñja* round the patient's limbs and to wash him with water in which he has put stalks of grass (*piñjūṭi*). Neither the author nor the stanzas that are to be recited give any further information on the function of the *muñja* cords<sup>42</sup> and on what one has to do with them after the patient has been washed or sprinkled (§ 4). In AVŚ. 7, 42, 1 the dual deity Soma and Rudra is besought to eject the disease, but the text is silent on how the gods are supposed to achieve this purpose. AVŚ. 7, 78, 1 "I loosen thy bridle (girth), thy harness, thy halter; be thou just here for ever, O Agni" appears at first sight to be addressed to Agni, and the opinion of the comm. on TS. 1, 6, 4, 3 – the words girth etc. refer to the *paridhi* sticks – is not absurd. The comm. on AVŚ., however,

35. See Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 389, n. 3 and Gonda, Vedic literature, p. 202 ff. This couple is often mentioned in the later literature (Mahābhārata etc.).

36. As to the use of *ni* see AVŚ. 10, 8, 7.

37. See also Renou, E. V. P. XV, p. 84.

38. "Vom Schilf gereinigt" (Pet. Dict., s.v. following Sāyaṇa, who refers to Mount Muñjavant where the veritable *soma* is said to grow (... *muñjatṛṇena śodhitam apagatatṛṇam ity arthaḥ*, which was incorrectly translated by Monier-Williams, Dict., s.v. "purified from *muñja*"); "Schilfschlempe" (Geldner, RV. I, p. 220); "rinçure d'(herbe) *muñja*" (Renou, l.c.).

39. Macdonell and Keith, Vedic Index, II, p. 165 "material of a filter for soma".

40. See p. 47 above.

41. Cf. also V. Henry, La magie dans l'Inde antique, Paris 1904, p. 206 f.

42. Dealing with the iconography of Brahmā the author of the Mayamata (36, 4) says that the brown thighs of this god should be enveloped in *muñja*.

regards the stanza as addressed either to Agni or to a person vexed with disease. Did this author, in the latter case, start from the assumption that the girth etc., i.e. the cords of *muñja*, had attracted or absorbed, or rather neutralized, the disease from which the patient came to be freed, when the cords were loosened? And is it the poet's hope that Agni, after having, as the dispeller of evil spirits etc., contributed to the patient's recovery, is besought to stay? If so, this interpretation and this use of the stanza are nevertheless in all probability secondary.

In contrast to Kauś. 32, 3 f. the description of a similar rite in 46, 26 ff. does not omit informing us of what becomes of the *muñja* cords in which the limbs of two brothers guilty of *parivedana* (the marrying of a younger brother before the elder) had been wrapped. When these persons have been washed or sprinkled the cords that had covered their neck and arms are put on pieces of foam (on waves of the river) and caused to float away with AVŚ. 6, 113, 2 cd "disappear along those foams of the river ..." It goes without saying that these objects are supposed to have absorbed the sin or evil that was inherent in the two brothers and to make it float away. In st. d Pūṣan<sup>43</sup> is requested to wipe this evil (*durilāni*) off on a criminal. The other cord or cords are thrown in the midst of the river (Keśava). It is worth observing that in AVŚ. 6, 112, 2 Agni is besought to loosen the bonds (cf. AVŚ. 7, 78, 1 quoted above).

If one wishes to obtain clothes one should wrap three pieces of fuel taken from the *kudī* – which is identified by the scholiasts with *badarī*, jujube (*zizyphus jujuba* Lam.<sup>44</sup>, the botanical name of a small spiny tree) – in a cobweb<sup>45</sup>, smear it (with grease, ghee (Keśava)) and place it on the fire (with AVŚ. 5, 1, 3; see below). According to the general rule Kauś. 7, 28 the person on whose behalf the rite is performed should inhale the smoke (Kauś. 21, 12 ff.). Thereupon (or alternatively) he should wrap three pieces of similar fuel in *muñja* grasses of which the reeds are longer than the sheaths<sup>46</sup>, smear them with honey, make them roll in barley-flour<sup>47</sup> and do likewise. Now, in the charm described in Kauś. 35, 24, which is to command a woman's love, the ends of 21 pieces of *kudī* are wrapped in red (comm.) threads consecrated with AVŚ. 3, 25 and placed on the fire. Since the red colour stands *inter alia* for sexual love<sup>48</sup>, the procedure is intelligible. It may therefore be surmised that the cobweb in Kauś. 21, 13 is to suggest a piece of woollen or cotton fabric. Is the same conclusion warranted with regard to the grasses in 21, 14: are they to create the impression of woven material fit for making clothes? As to AVŚ. 5, 1, 3 (see above; cf. AVP. 6, 2, 3), it is true that the word garments (*vastrāṇi*) in *pāda* d is the only clear reference to the clothes for which the rite is performed<sup>49</sup>. But

43. See J. Gonda, Pūṣan and Sarasvatī, Amsterdam Acad. 1985, § 79.

44. Cf. Meulenbeld, Mādhavanidāna, p. 580 etc. The *zizyphus jujuba* has alternate three-veined elliptic to ovate leaves; the other species, the Indian or cottony jujube, has leaves which are woolly beneath instead of smooth.

45. See W. Caland, in ZDMG 53, p. 219.

46. *atyanteṣīkaḥ*; see Caland's note, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 55, n. 5.

47. The reading is uncertain; see Bloomfield's note in the edition, p. 58, n. 1.

48. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 45.

49. See the note in Whitney and Lanman, Ath. Saṃh., p. 221.



were the words “he who has left (his) body to thy heat, causes gold to flow” in the first line perhaps taken to refer to the *kudīs* which are burnt? The rest is not clear.

In Kauś. 14, 28 cords made of hemp and *muñja* are magic containers; smeared with and fortified by (*alamkṛta*) *īṅgīḍa* oil – which in magic is used instead of ghee – and consecrated with AV. 4, 31 and 32 – in which Manyu (Fury) is besought to overpower the enemies – they are thrown on the way on which the army of the enemy is expected to approach, probably as a sort of magically strengthened snares.

It is interesting to note that the upper end (i.e. the blossom, Keśava) of *muñja* grass is used as an amulet. When it has been duly prepared and consecrated with AVŚ. 1, 2 or 23 it is to be worn round the neck of the person who is suffering from such diseases as diarrhoea, an excessive flow of urine, a fistula (Kauś. 25, 6). It is to be fastened with a cord of *muñja*. The grass may, of course, here also have a protective function, but in view of the use of a reed (*śara*) as a catheter in a similar medical treatment described in 25, 10 ff. (esp. § 15)<sup>50</sup> it was perhaps also regarded as being specially efficacious in this particular case.

In Kauś. 56, 1 and 57, 1, dealing with the *upanayana*, mention is made of a girdle for a brahmin youth made of *bhadra* – no doubt because of its name “the auspicious or prosperous one” – and *muñja* (*bhādramañja*). The accompanying mantras are AVŚ. 6, 133, 4 and 5 imploring “the daughter of *śraddhā*, born out of *tapas*, sister of the ... *ṛṣiḥ*”, to assign to those speaking inspired thought, wisdom, *tapas*, command of their faculties and length of life.

50. Cf. also Henry, *Magie*, p. 207 f. and above.

## VIII

### Kāśa

The word *kāśa*<sup>1</sup>, which for all I know does not occur in the *saṃhitās*<sup>2</sup> and *brāhmaṇas*, denotes the *saccharum spontaneum* Linn.<sup>3</sup> It is a firm kind of grass, with white flowers (see *Ṛtusamhāra* 3, 1 f.; 28) and was often used to make strings or cords<sup>4</sup>. The flowers look very much like chauries (cf. *Kāl.*, *Ragh.* 4, 17). It is in *Kauś.* 40, 2 one of the plants used in a magic ceremony for directing the water of a stream into a certain course, obviously because it is known to grow in a humid soil and is therefore supposed to attract water. The commentator Keśava informs us that *AVŚ.* 3, 13 is muttered over it and that the performer of the rite plants this grass in a ditch (in order to start the process wished for).

The stanza *ṚV.* 10, 16, 9 (*AVŚ.* 12, 2, 8; *VS.* 35, 19) is used in the ritual damping of the fire and removing of its ashes when one's father or another respected person has died, or when one has been afflicted by other misfortune (cf. *KŚ.* 21, 4, 28; *Kauś.* 71, 12; *ĀśvG.* 4, 6, 2; *MG.* 2, 1, 8; *VG.* 45, 6). Whereas the author of *ĀśvG.* has the fire and the ashes removed together with their *āyatana* "receptacle", *MG.* enjoins those concerned to spread the ashes on a straw-mat (*kaṭe*) or a skin, *VG.* and *VGP.* 1, 6 (*Gṛhyapuruṣa*, p. 141 reading *kāśānām mūṭakate*) state that they should be thrown together on a mat that has been made ("woven") out of *kāśa* grass<sup>5</sup>. The variant *kāśānām mūḍhakate* "on a disordered *kāśa* mat" is explained as "on a mat that has been made out of *trṇa* together with *muñja*, and with the roots and the tips" (*Devapāla*).

The alliterative combination *kāśakuśa* (*Pāṇini*, *Gaṇ.* 2, 2, 31) or *kuśa kāśa* (e.g. *VaikhŚ.* 11, 10; 130, 5; *Rām.* 2, 25, 13; personified *Mbh.* 2, 8, 29) is rather frequent. In *AVPar.* 1, 6, 3 both kinds of grass are, together with iron, silver, gold, fruits, roots, flowers, among those objects that are affected by the individual *nakṣatras*, a fact that sheds some light on the significance attached to them. – In *BD.* 7, 78 *Agni*

1. In translations sometimes mistaken for *kuśa* (e.g. O. Walter, *Der Kumārasambhava*, München and Leipzig 1913, p. 63 (7, 11)). No plausible etymology of this word has been suggested.
2. In *ṚV.* 10, 100, 10 the text reads *koṭe*, not *kāṭe* (cf. *Pet. Wtb.*, II, 269, s.v. *kāśa*).
3. See also Meulenbeld, *Mādhavanidhāna*, p. 74; 543.
4. See, e.g., the description of the *yaṣṭikākarma* (*SkandaP.* 10, 64 ff.) in Meyer, *Trilogie*, II, p. 181 ff.
5. See W. Caland, *Altindische Todten- und Bestattungsgebräuche*. Amsterdam Acad. 1892, p. 113 ff. and in *GGA* 1898, p. 63.

is related to have shaken off his limbs etc.; his sinews became the fragrant *tejana* (see below), the hair on his body *kāśa*, the hair on his head *kuśa*<sup>6</sup>.

The relative value of *kāśa* is difficult to assess and may have depended on traditional opinions of communities, families or the views of individual authorities as well as on circumstances. From GG. 2, 10, 10 it might be inferred that *kāśa* was less valuable than *muñja* but of greater value than the kind of hemp called *tambala*, because the girdle of a brahmin youth who is to be initiated should be made of *muñja*, that of a *kṣatriya* of *kāśa*, etc. In default of *kuśa* one may according to the authority cited in the general rule KŚ. 1, 3, 12 comm.<sup>7</sup> use *kāśa*, in default of *kāśa* “other suitable, usual or acceptable (*yathocitāḥ*) *darbhāḥ*”, according to ViS. 79, 2<sup>8</sup>, dealing with the *śrāddha* ritual, one should give either *kāśa* or *dhūrvā*; according to VaikhŚ. 11, 10: 130, 5 in default of *kuśa*, *kāśa* and hair of the tail of a horse fragrant reed (*tejana*, bamboo), *muñja*, the soft grass called *ulapa*, ... *dhūrvā*, *tṛṇa* may be used.

The order in which the clumps or tufts of four kinds of grass occur in ĀgnG. 3, 8, 3: 164, 23 is no criterion, because the *arjuna*, *dhūrvā*, *kāśa* and *darbha* are counter-clockwise co-ordinated with the regions of the universe; the *darbha* is also elsewhere connected with the south and the deceased<sup>9</sup>; *dhūrvā*, “nobility, vital breath and essence” (ŚB. 7, 4, 2, 12), is associated with the north, the region of men, here *kāśa* is expected to ward off the demons in the west, the region of hope or expectation<sup>10</sup>.

6. See also Lakṣmī T. 24, 37 the adept should be seated on *kuśa*, wear coarse garments made of *kāśa*, lie on *kuśa*.

7. On this place see ch. X D, n. 1.

8. See also Meyer, Trilogie, II, p. 181, n. 1.

9. See, e.g., Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 54; 442.

10. Ibidem, p. 55.

# IX

## Other grasses

*Balbaja*, *eleusine indica*, is a coarse rush-like grass not liked by cattle<sup>1</sup>. It has remained in use for thatching, making hats, slippers, baskets, swing-ropes and so on. The poet of RV. 8, 55, 3 (= RVkh. 3, 7, 3) enumerates a number of presents, among them 100 bamboo canes, 100 dogs, 100 tanned hides and 100 *balbajastukāḥ*, a compound which has been explained as “tufts of grass” (*trṇapūlāḥ*, comm. in the Poona edition 1941), “Geflecht von Balbaja-Gras” (Grassmann), “(Schafe) mit Flocken wie Balbajagrass” (Geldner, cf. 8, 56, 3, but notice the accent). That *balbaja* was used to make wicker- or basket work appears from AVPar. 23, 1, 5: “in ordinary life ... the winnowing basket is ... made of blades of *kuśa* ..., of bamboo (again *veṇu* in the same context) or of *balbaja*”. It could also be a substitute for other material, if that was not available for making the girdle of a *vaiśya* (PG. 2, 5, 24; Manu 2, 43), but one must not use it to make a *barhis*, if the right material, viz. *kuśa*, cannot be obtained (GG. 1, 5, 18). From these places it is apparent that it was regarded as a comparatively poor grass. However, in ViS. 27, 18 *balbaja* is the normal material for a *vaiśya* girdle, and in ĀpDh. 1, 21, 1 *muñja* and *balbaja* (and by implication, objects made of them, Haradatta) are the only articles mentioned by name in an enumeration of objects (“roots, fruits etc.”) with which one should not make too eagerly a livelihood.

When the newly married young woman has entered the house of her husband somebody (probably her husband) has, according to Kauś. 78, 1 ff., to bring the hide of a red ox “to be spread under this woman” (AVŚ. 14, 2, 21 = AVP. 18, 9, 2). The following mantras, being quarters and half stanzas of AVŚ. 22 and 23 (corresponding to P. 4 and 3<sup>2</sup>) are addressed to the person who spreads the hide (under) (Kauś. 2; AVŚ. 22 b), casts down *balbaja* grass (Kauś. 3; AVŚ. 22 a), spreads (out) the *balbaja* (*upastṛṇantam*, *upa stṛṇīhi* in the mantra, not “spreading under”<sup>3</sup>) upon the red hide (Kauś. 4; AVŚ. 23 ab), makes “the girl of good progeny who finds a hus-

1. The word is in all probability not Indo-European and looks like a loan-word that has been adapted in the lower strata of the Aryan society. See also Wackernagel, *Altind. Grammatik*, I, p. 184; F.B.J. Kuiper, *Studia Indologica*, Festschrift W. Kirfel, Bonn 1955, p. 145.
2. In AVP. these two stanzas occur in a reverse order. As the readings of both redactions are identical, one should not say (with Whitney and Lanman, *AthV. Saṃh.*, p. 758) that in AVP. the parts of these stanzas are more or less exchanged.
3. Cf. RV. 8, 73, 3, on which see H.D. Velankar, in *Indological studies in honor of W. Norman Brown*, New Haven Conn. 1962, p. 235, and Renou, *E.V.P. XVI*, p. 67.

band mount" (Kauś. 5; AVŚ. 22 cd), and sit down and worship the fire (Kauś. 6; AVŚ. 23 cd). Thereupon the bride takes a brahmin boy into her lap, who by means of suggestive analogy should bring about the birth of male progeny<sup>4</sup>. It seems clear that the bride is to sit down on the *balbaja* which is spread<sup>5</sup> on the hide of an animal (a red ox or bull) that is a well-known representative of fecundity<sup>6</sup>. In most parallel passages no mention is made of the grass and the bride is to sit down on the hide (HG. 1, 22, 9; PG. 1, 8, 10 etc.), but according to MG. 1, 14, 7 (cf. 1, 11, 9) the hide is bestrewn with *darbha*, or one causes her to sit down on *darbha* only; according to KG. 28, 4 she is to sit down on the hide or on *darbha*. Since physical contact with *darbha* may – but does not necessarily – produce fecundity, it may be asked why the AV. tradition prefers *balbaja* grass in addition to the hide. Was it believed to possess some virtue or property that is not attested to in other texts? – In any case, the plaited bottom of the special *āsandī* seat of *udumbara* wood for the pot in which the *pravargya* milk is heated on the occasion of the *pravargya* should consist of *balbaja* (KŚ. 26, 2, 8).

Another only imperfectly understood use is made of *balbaja* in the *Indrāṇī* rite<sup>7</sup> – the only rite for interested purposes (*kāmyeṣṭi*) in which this goddess is presented with a *caru* (boiled rice). It is performed on behalf of a king, whose army is not resolved upon its task<sup>8</sup> (TS. 2, 2, 8, 1; BŚ. 13, 13: 127, 9) or is marching off (*uttiṣṭhati*, KS. 10, 10: 136, 9; MS. 2, 2, 5: 19, 6; MŚ. 5, 1, 9, 36). "For *Indrāṇī* is the deity of the army<sup>9</sup>; thus he has recourse to *Indrāṇī* with her own share; she urges his army on" (TS.). One should fasten *balbaja* grass to the fuel (TS. etc.)<sup>10</sup>. *Balbaja* grasses came into existence (*utthitāḥ*, KS. 1. 10; 14; MS. 1. 8) from cowdung (*śakṛt*)<sup>11</sup>. One should sprinkle them (with ghee, ĀpŚ. 19, 19, 5), after putting them together on the fire (BŚ. 1. 11). The mantras prescribed give no information on the function of this grass. *Balbaja* was apparently regarded as very inflammable: when the enemies of the Pāṇḍavas attempted to burn them, they had a house of lac made, of which the building materials, hemp, resin, *muñja*, *balbaja*, cane etc. were sprinkled with ghee (Mbh. 1, 134, 14). Cowdung, on the other hand, has in India always been a much used material for fires (see, e.g., ŚB. 12, 5, 2, 3)<sup>12</sup>. These two facts

4. For this ceremony see M. Winternitz, Das altindische Hochzeitsritual, Wien (Vienna) Acad. 1892, p. 75 and (also for other references) M.J. Dresden, Mānavagṛhyasūtra, Thesis Utrecht, Groningen 1941, p. 71.
5. See also Keśava on Kauś. 78, 5 *balbajastṛte carmaṇi vadhūm ārohayati*. The order of the mantras in AVŚ. may attest to a somewhat different performance.
6. Cf. Meyer, Trilogie, I, p. 62 f.
7. W. Caland, Altindische Zauberei (Wunschopfer), Amsterdam Acad. 1908, p. 80 f.
8. Keith, Veda Black Yajur School, p. 155 translated: "whose dart is not as it were sharp ...; the deity of the arrow is *Indrāṇī*", but he obviously overlooked the explanation *asamsiteva, adhrtevy arthaḥ* in HŚ. 22, 5.
9. *Indrāṇī* = *Senā* ("Army") (TS. 2, 4, 2, 7) who is Indra's wife (AiB. 3, 22, 7).
10. In the note BŚ. 23, 2: 150, 1 this is said to be Baudhāyana's opinion; Śālikī said that in this case the *barhis* was made of *balbaja* grasses tied together (see also KS. 10, 10: 136, 13 describing the second *Indrāṇī* rite).
11. TS., § 2 reads instead: "where the cow being covered made water, thence grew the *balbajāḥ*" which is less clear, and adds that if one follows the rule of the cows, one finds cows.
12. And Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 107.



seem to explain the use of *balbaja* in the Indrānī rite and the reference to its mythical origin. Does its combustibility also explain its use in KŚ. 26, 2, 8? (see above).

*Vīriṇa* or *vīraṇa*<sup>13</sup>, botanically known as *andropogon muricatus* Retz., is a grass with a thick stalk which attains to a height of four or six feet<sup>14</sup>. Its fragrant root is called *uśīra*<sup>15</sup>, and is as one of the “six drugs” in Indian medicine an ingredient of a fever-draught<sup>16</sup>.

In Kauś. 18 *vīriṇa* is prescribed in *nairṛta* rites, magical performances undertaken in order to appease the goddess of decay Nirṛti, to counteract her influence, and to ward off evil and misfortune<sup>17</sup>. In 18, 10 old powder of the *vīriṇa* – a comm., no doubt rightly, explains: *uśīra* – is strewn on the straw (of the roof) of one’s house when it is being burnt; this powder of the root is in all probability supposed to prevent, just as the thatch<sup>18</sup>, the evil powers from exerting their influence<sup>19</sup>. A similar use is made of the plant (root) in the Nirṛti rite 18, 13 with an offering of rice mixed with pebbles<sup>20</sup> and the recitation of AVŚ. 3, 20 in which Agni and other gods are besought to increase the wealth of those speaking and so on. Is this evil-destroying power of (burnt) *vīraṇa* grass (roots) perhaps the reason why the *śūdra* who has approached a brahmin woman should be tied up in that grass and thrown into the fire? (VāsDh. 21, 1); the woman, having undergone a severe punishment, is explicitly said to become pure thereby. In Kauś. 35, 30 the author prescribes offering (into the fire) *iṅgiḍa* oil mixed with tufts (panicles) of *vīriṇa* in (through) a folded (*paṭāśa* leaf) in order to drive away demons. In 26, 26, a magic ceremony for the relief of one frightened, an amulet consisting of four stalks (*iṣṭkā*) of the *vīraṇa* is consecrated with AVŚ. 1, 28 in which Agni, the demon-slayer and expeller of diseases, is implored to burn up the “sorcerers”; the grass is in all manuscripts said to be *śuklaprasūta* which can mean “sprung white” or “sprung in the bright half of a lunar month”, an auspicious moment<sup>21</sup>. Kauś. 32, 13 is a magic method of combating the disease called *jāyānya*, that was sometimes identified with *rājyakṣma*<sup>22</sup> – which comprises “the whole series of conditions, of whatever origin, between physical

13. The etymology of the word is not clear; relationship with Dravidian words for the same plant (Tamil *vīral* etc.) is possible (see T. Burrow, in BSOAS 12, p. 394); connexions with *vīra* “man, hero” are a result of popular etymology (for details see Mayrhofer, Etym. Wörterbuch, II, p. 237 f. and in Kratylos, 6, p. 161).

14. Cf. Rām. 2, 74, 8 where this grass, called strong, is to be pulled out when a road is being constructed.

15. Of unknown origin. We also find *uśīraṇam mūlāni* (e.g. Keśava, on Kauś. 29, 24).

16. Meulenbeld, Mādhavanidāna, p. 189.

17. I refer to Caland, Altind. Zauberritual, p. 42 ff.; V. Henry, La magie dans l’Inde antique, Paris 1904, p. 160 ff.

18. See Caland, op. cit., p. 44; 82; 182 f.; for setting it on fire see also Kauś. 75, 10; a wooer should take thatch from the girl’s house and burn it (if he is afraid that he will not be successful).

19. Burning incense or other fragrant substances is a well-known means of exorcising all harmful influences; see, e.g., Frazer, Golden Bough, abr. ed., p. 257; 735.

20. Pebbles are often used for various magical purposes, for instance for warding off misfortune (see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 137).

21. The editor preferred to read *śuklaprasūnasya* “having white blossoms”.

22. Thus Sāyaṇa and Keśava; see M. Bloomfield, Hymns of the Atharva-Veda, Oxford 1897 (Delhi 1967), p. 561 (with antiquated explanations).

exhaustion and cachexia<sup>23</sup> – or is a similar disease. The patient (probably, his neck) is bound by means of a “strap” – i.e. a piece of the sheath of the *vīraṇa* – that has withered of itself (i.e. naturally, Keśava explains: “fallen of itself”), has been combined three times (i.e. three pieces of sheath are made one, Keśava), kept for three days in sour milk and honey and consecrated with AVŚ. 7, 76, 3, a text in which the whole *jāyānya* is declared to have been cast out. The sheath is obviously regarded as an amulet that produces an instantaneous effect; it has absorbed the virtue of *dadhi* and honey (cf. Kauś. 7, 19; 25, 6)<sup>24</sup>. – If the war-drums are smeared with (old) *uśīra* powder and the likewise fragrant powder of the *tagara* (species of *ervatamia*) they will make a suitable means of putting the enemies to flight (Kauś. 16, 1, with AVŚ. 5, 20 and 6, 126; notice that in 6, 126, 2 the drum is requested to drive away also difficulties and misfortune). While acting in accordance with the words “I split the head with a stone, I burn the mouth with fire” (AVŚ. 5, 23, 13 c d), one splits and burns 21<sup>25</sup> *uśīrāṇi* in a healing ceremony against worms (Kauś. 29, 20 ff.; see 24).

In a section containing general precepts for appeasing portents the author gives, *inter alia*, the following directions: one should, after the morning-oblation, bring or send for *darbha* (plur.), *śamī* wood, *vīraṇa*, *dadhi*, butter, mustard seeds and other auspicious things, take a ritual bath etc., kindle the fire and perform one of the sacrifices that are specified in the following paragraphs. Thereupon the requisites are brought *pradakṣiṇam* and used to sprinkle what has been touched in order to appease (the guilt of having hurt something): ŚB. 5, 2, 3; 5, 10, 5 f. A similar enumeration of auspicious plants and branches (*darbha*, *śamī*, *vīraṇa*, *phalavālī*, *apāmārga*, *śirīṣa*<sup>26</sup>) occurs in GG. 3, 9, 4, where they are used to strike the smoke of the sacred fire and then thrown away (*āgrahāyaṇī* rites<sup>27</sup>). The ground on which one intends to build a house must be grown over by (useful) plants and trees, and (especially) by much *kuśa* and *vīraṇa* (ĀśvG. 2, 7, 4). The place where the bones of a deceased person are deposited should, doubtless for the same reason, not only be pleasant and beautiful (KŚ. 21, 3, 22) but also have furrows<sup>28</sup> and *vīriṇa* grass (*vīriṇāṇi* *trṇāṇi*, comm., 26)<sup>29</sup>. One should make the sepulchral mound on ground that is filled with roots, because a spot filled with roots belongs to the Fathers, and it should be a spot containing *vīriṇa* and other grasses, for thus the Fathers’ share in this (earth) is not excessive (that means, not all ground covered with vegetation belongs to

23. Meulenbeld, op. cit., p. 628; see also J. Filliozat, *La doctrine classique de la médecine indienne*, Paris 1949, p. 39; 88 f.

24. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 182 f. (*dadhi*); 107 f.; 258 f.; 372 f. etc. (honey). Honey was already at an early date valued for its medicinal virtues. See also Meulenbeld, op. cit., p. 486 f.; 490.

25. For the number 21 see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 40 f.

26. The enumerations in ŚB. (where it is interrupted by *dadhi* etc.) and GG. as well as the words preceding them are identical and therefore probably of common origin. For *apāmārga* see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 17 etc., the *śirīṣa* (acacia sirissa) is believed to destroy poison (Meulenbeld, op. cit., p. 53).

27. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 62; 113; 157; 354; 419 etc.

28. Furrows, producing food (cf. ŚB. 7, 2, 2, 13) are auspicious (Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 306; 387 etc.).

29. It is interesting to note that the ancestors addressed by Jaratkāru in Mbh. 1, 13, 13 are described as hanging upside down from a tuft of *vīraṇa*; likewise 1, 41, 4; 6; 7.

them, but that which is assigned to them should have *vīriṇa*). The text (ŚB. 13, 8, 1, 15) goes on to say that thereby one makes the (deceased's) sin or impurity a binder (see also 13, 8, 3, 10), that is, I guess<sup>30</sup>, binding only the deceased person himself, not his son or descendants (in harmony with the limited plot; has the *vīriṇa* too a sin-effacing function?).

Long upper parts of sheaths of *vīriṇa*, *śara* and other grasses form the material of which the so-called *rarāṭhya*, "front-band" (of the shed for the *soma* vehicles) is made (KŚ. 8, 3, 26 comm.)<sup>31, 32</sup>.

Some very rare words for particular grasses occur in GG. 1, 5, 18 and JG. 1, 1: 1, 11 "if *kuśa* grass cannot be obtained, one may take any kind of grass, with the exception of *śukatrṇa* ("awn-grass"<sup>33</sup>), *śara*<sup>34</sup> (saccharum reed), *śīrya* (which may be grass that is apt to break or a particular kind of very brittle grass), *balbaja*, *mutava*, *nala* (a species of reed; amphidonax), or *śuṅṭha*<sup>35</sup>. The identity and etymology of *mutava* and *śuṅṭha* are unknown to me. If the latter word is identical with *śuṅṭha* that is applied to a bull or a cow and this means "small"<sup>36</sup>, it may denote a small kind of grass<sup>37</sup>.

*Mūrvā*<sup>38</sup> is a sort of hemp, sansevieria Roxb.<sup>39</sup> of which the girdle of a *kṣatriya* or a *vaiśya* (Kauś. 57, 2; PG. 2, 5, 23; JG. 1, 12: 12, 10; BhG. 1, 2: 2, 8; VG. 5, 7; KG. 41, 12; VaikhG. 2, 4: 23, 10) and a bowstring are made (cf. VG. 5, 7; KG. 41, 12). The *āsmantaka* which in this connexion occurs also (in PG. 2, 5, 24; Manu 2, 43) is according to Kullūka a kind of grass (*tṛṇaviśeṣa*).

The word *ghāsa* "food, fodder" has sometimes (correctly) been translated by "meadow or pasture grass" (see, e.g., MG. 1, 23, 16; VG. 7, 15; Kauś. 21, 11; ŚB. 6, 6, 3, 8).

30. See also Eggeling's note, Śat. Br. V, p. 427, and Manu 3, 68 *badhyate* (sc. *pāpina*, Kullūka).

31. Cf. also ŚB. 3, 5, 3, 9; Eggeling, op. cit., II, p. 128; Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 89; Caland, Śraut. Āp., II, p. 209.

32. The compound *durbīriṇāni*, used in connexion with the hair on the body (ŚB. 11, 4, 1, 6; 14) and explained as *duṣṭāni vīraṇāni*, being an imperfect simile, needs no discussion.

33. See Mayrhofer, Etym. Wörterbuch, III, p. 363.

34. Mayrhofer, op. cit., III, p. 306 and A.M. Ghatage, in Indian Linguistics 33 (1972), p. 230 ff.

35. See p. 50 above.

36. Mayrhofer, op. cit., III, p. 354.

37. For similar enumerations see BŚ. 28, 13: 366, 5 *śaramaya*, *kutapa*, *āstavāla* (saccharum spontaneum), *muṅḡja*, fragrant *tejana*, *arjuna*, *ādāra*, *dūrvā* and *śyāmāka* and MŚ. 8, 2, 5 *kaṭa*, *sira*, *śuṣa*, *śuṅṭha*, *nala* (amphidonax karka), *parivāha*, *mūṭapa*, *valvaja*.

38. Mayrhofer, op. cit., II, p. 666.

39. For other names see Meulenbeld, Mādhavanidāna, p. 587; 588; 590 ff.

## Barhis

### A. BARHIS IN THE ṚGVEDA

In the Ṛgveda-Saṃhitā *barhis*<sup>1</sup> is a frequent term denoting the grass which for ritual purposes is strewn on the sacrificial ground<sup>2</sup>. The gods are often invited to sit down on the *barhis*<sup>3</sup> (1, 12, 4; 1, 13, 7; 9; 1, 26, 4; 1, 31, 17; 1, 44, 13; 1, 142, 9; 2, 6, 8; 2, 36, 3; 2, 41, 13; 3, 4, 8; 3, 41, 9; 5, 46, 5; 6, 52, 7; 7, 91, 4; 8, 1, 8; 8, 13, 24; 8, 27, 6; 8, 87, 2; 10, 43, 2; 10, 70, 5; 8; 10, 110, 8 (cf. also 3, 43, 1)) or are said to sit down (1, 85, 7) or to be seated there (8, 28, 1; 10, 30, 15; 10, 63, 1; cf. 1, 144, 6; 5, 26, 8; 5, 44, 3; 6, 67, 2; 7, 39, 2; 8, 13, 4; 8, 15, 5; 10, 14, 5); in 7, 33, 1 Indra gets up from the *barhis*.

Among the gods mentioned in this connexion are also Night and Morning (7, 42, 5) and the Waters (10, 30, 15) and, what should interest us more, in a considerable number of cases Agni. The god of (the ritual) fire is invited or expected to sit down on the *barhis* after he has, as the messenger, roused other gods to action (1, 12, 4) or is asked to come with them as the best worshipper (*yajīṣṭhaḥ*, 3, 13, 1); to bring them and to sit down "in the middle on the *barhis*" (*mādhye ā barhiḥ*, i.e. *sīrṇaśya barhiṣo madhye*, Sāyaṇa, likewise Renou and others, 3, 14, 2, where he is asked to lend assistance); or simply to sit down or to be seated there together with the gods (5, 26, 5; 7, 11, 2; 8, 44, 14). Sometimes he is invited to do so as a (or the) *hotar* (6, 16, 10 *nī hōtā satsī barhiṣi*, notice the locative suggesting that the god is expected to fulfil his *hotar* function<sup>4</sup> whilst being seated on the *barhis*). In 6,

1. Some of the translations proposed are Opferstreu (Grassmann, Wörterbuch, 901; H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart and Berlin 1923, p. 342 ff.), sacrificial grass (A.A. Macdonell, A. Vedic reader, Oxford 1928, p. 241), sacrificial strew (Keith, Religion and philosophy, p. 286), jonchée (rituelle) or litière (Renou, E.V.P. V, p. 2 (RV. 1, 14, 5); X, p. 18 (1, 85, 7)). The term Pflanzenpolster (H. von Glasenapp, Die Religionen Indiens, Stuttgart 1943, p. 54) is to be avoided.
2. Sāyaṇa sometimes explains *barhiḥ* by *darbhah* (on RV. 1, 13, 7; 1, 44, 13; 1, 142, 5; 5, 9, 2), or *barhiṣi* by *āstīṇe darbhe* (on 1, 31, 17; 8, 13, 24).
3. See also K.R. Potdar, Sacrifice in the Ṛgveda, Bombay 1953, p. 57 f. — Also RVKh. 5, 7, 1 c, g.
4. On this function of officiating at the sacrifice see A.A. Macdonell, Vedic mythology, Strassburg 1897, p. 96 f.; Gonda, Religionen Indiens, 1, p. 70. As to the locative compare RV. 2, 36, 2 and 3.

12, 1 Agni, the *hotar*, is the king (lord) of the *barhis*<sup>5</sup>. Notice that in later texts this stanza is one of the kindling mantras recited by the *hotar* and that the *barhis* is in ŚB. 1, 4, 1, 24 said to be this world.

Occasionally, Agni is invited alone to sit down (4, 9, 1; 8, 23, 26 where he is requested to bring the oblations to the gods; 10, 188, 1 where he is addressed as Jātavedas). It would appear to me that in the above cases Agni, functioning as the messenger (intermediary between men and gods)<sup>6</sup> or as the *hotar*, should be regarded as a god like the others, not – at least not primarily – as identical with the ritual fire, notwithstanding the fact that he owes these functions to his being that fire. The god's double character or personality is explicitly stated in 5, 11, 2 "the men (of good birth and position) have on the triple seat<sup>7</sup> set to fire the luminous ensign of the sacrifice, the first *purohita* (the one who has been "placed before (others who need his protection)")<sup>8</sup>, Agni; approaching in the same chariot as Indra, as the gods, he is expected to sit down (*śīdat*, or has sat down) on the *barhis* as the inventive *hotar* in order to worship". In 7, 11, 5 Agni is asked, on the one hand, to invite the gods to come and to partake of the offerings and on the other hand to carry these offerings to the gods<sup>9</sup>. In 8, 60, 1 Agni is besought to approach together with the other Agnis (the ritual fires)<sup>10</sup> and this request is followed by the promise "we choose thee as the *hotar*"; the second half of the stanza is interesting: "the (ladle that has been) stretched forth and contains the oblation must anoint thee, the best worshipper, that (thou wilt) sit down on the *barhis*". In 3, 19, 5 it is the gods who are supposed to be willing to anoint Agni "as the *hotar* for the sake of the offering of sacrificial food installing him with a view to sacrificing" and the persons speaking implore his assistance. That is to say, they are supposed to anoint him, as the sacrificial fire, with ghee and by this act appoint him *hotar*.

Returning now to the gods in general, I draw attention to 1, 85, 7 which shows that in taking their seat on the *barhis* they are compared to birds. In many passages the gods are said or invited to sit down on the *barhis* to enjoy the oblations, but – with the exception of 7, 2, 4 (see below) – the texts give no information on the exact place of the *barhis* and its relation to the other parts of the sacrificial place; see 1, 26, 4; 1, 85, 6; 3, 24, 3; 6, 52, 13; 6, 68, 11; 7, 57, 2; 10, 14, 5; 10, 36, 5; 10, 63, 1; 10, 70, 11; in 10, 17, 8 Sarasvatī coming together with the Fathers (cf.

5. Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 132 had his doubts about the meaning "king", but kingship had a sacred character and Agni and a human king have important functions and qualities in common (they both are intermediaries, protectors, promoters of welfare); see J. Gonda, in Kuhn's Zeitschrift, 73, p. 151 ff., esp. p. 156 (= S.S. I, p. 415 ff.) and The sacred character of ancient Indian kingship, Supplements to Numen, 4, p. 172 ff. (= S.S. IV, p. 475 ff.).

6. Macdonell, op. cit., p. 96.

7. i.e. the sacrificial place with the three fires (*vihārapradēśe*, Sāyana).

8. I refer to J. Gonda, Purohita, in Studia indologica, Festschrift W. Kirfel, Bonn 1955, p. 107 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 320 ff.).

9. On this "confusion in the conceptions of Agni's functions" see Oldenberg, Rel. d. Veda, p. 347 (was the "Widerspruch" in the eyes of the Vedic Aryans so considerable as it is in Oldenberg's opinion?); Keith, Religion and philosophy, p. 286 f. (is the formulation "the practice of sacrifice among Iranians (who used no fire) came to be changed in the Vedic period" correct?).

10. As to *agnir agnihūh* see RV. 1, 26, 10; 3, 24, 4; 6, 10, 2; 6, 11, 6; 6, 12, 6 etc.



also 1, 135, 1; 10, 70, 8; 10, 110, 8); to eat the rice-cake (*puṛoḍāś*, 3, 41, 3); and often to drink *soma* (1, 45, 9; 1, 109, 5 adding *yajñe* "at this sacrifice" to *barhiṣi*; 2, 36, 2; 3, 35, 6; 5, 72, 1-3; 6, 23, 7; 7, 24, 3; 7, 91, 4; 8, 17, 1; 8, 87, 4). But also to listen to the eulogy (3, 53, 3), to give protection (2, 3, 8), or to grant to the one who performs the rites well and is liberal refreshing food (1, 47, 8) and to those speaking desirable possessions (7, 59, 6), for (only) if one spreads the *barhis* for the gods and wins their favour by means of eulogies will one be successful (2, 11, 16). In 6, 23, 7 Indra is asked to make wide room for the one who longs for him<sup>11</sup>. What is interesting is that in 10, 35, 10 the gods and the seven *hotars*, i.e. the officiants enumerated in 2, 1, 2 (see also 3, 10, 4 etc.), are invited to the convivial party, the former on the *barhis*, the latter most probably not (*ā no barhiḥ ... devām ūle, sādāyā sapta hótṛn*)<sup>12</sup>. In 8, 87, 2, the Aśvins are requested to drink to hot drink, to sit down on the *barhis* and to be delighted in the residence of man (*mānuṣo duroné*, what is the exact meaning?, certainly not the *barhis*, cf. 1, 117, 2; 1, 183, 1 etc.).

The stanzas devoted to the *barhis* in the *āpṛī* hymns, in which in addition to some deities a few sacrificial requisites regarded as divine are invoked<sup>13</sup>, deserve special attention, because they may be supposed to give information on what the poets considered to be relevant, important or characteristic of this layer of grass. It is, in the early morning (10, 110, 4), spread (the verb is *sṛj*) for the gods (1, 13, 5; 1, 142, 5; 2, 3, 4; 3, 4, 4), eastward (1, 188, 4; 10, 110, 4)<sup>14</sup>, in continuous order (1, 13, 5), broad, long, and offering wide space (1, 142, 5; 10, 70, 4; 10, 110, 4; cf. 1, 188, 4<sup>15</sup>; 2, 3, 4; 5, 5, 4); soft as wool (5, 5, 4), with ghee on its surface or smeared over with ghee (*ghṛtāpṛṣṭha*, 1, 13, 5; 2, 3, 4; 7, 2, 4; cf. 1, 142, 5), in order to receive the gods or the "immortal" (1, 13, 5; 1, 142, 5; 3, 4, 4; cf. 2, 3, 4) at the sacrifice (*yajñe* which in 1, 142, 5 is said to be *svadhvare* "that is proceeding well"<sup>16</sup>) with a view to procuring (the sacrificer etc.) wealth or profits (2, 3, 4; 5, 5, 4).

In connexion with the above *āpṛī* stanzas it should be noticed that the verb *vṛjje* (viz. *barhiḥ*) in 1, 142, 5 has been translated "lege ich herum" (Grassmann<sup>17</sup>; Geldner), "je retourne" (Renou)<sup>18</sup>, but *vṛj-* properly means "to pluck, gather, twist

11. Wide room, Lebensraum: see J. Gonda, *Loka*, Amsterdam Acad. 1966, p. 22 etc.

12. Thus also Renou, E.V.P. V, p. 51; otherwise Geldner, RV. übers. III, p. 187.

13. See Gonda, Vedic literature, p. 104. These hymns probably belong to a comparatively early type of *sūkta*, in which the ritual had not yet assumed its later proportions and seem to have been composed for purposes centering round Agni. One should however not say, as H.D. Griswold, *The religion of the Rigveda*, Oxford 1932 does, that in these hymns the *barhis* is adored as a form of Agni. — See also RVKh. VII, 3 a *devam barhis sudevam; k devam barhiḥ*.

14. The gods are expected to come from that direction. The words *prāṭisā pṛthivyāḥ* mean "by the order of the earth" rather than "in der Richtung der Erde" (Geldner).

15. The adjective *sahasravāram* in 1, 188, 4 ("qui (vaut) mille hommes-d'élite", Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 42,?) may be taken to suggest that it can receive all the gods, "a thousand" expressing totality and *vāra* being often used to denote Indra and other gods; cf. *suvāram* in 2, 3, 4. As to the breadth of the *barhis* see also 1, 85, 6. A *bṛhad barhis* (10, 35, 10) is a firm or solid rather than a high (Geldner) layer of grass.

16. viz. on its way to the gods; on *adhvare* see J. Gonda, in *Vishv. Indol. Journal* 3 (Hoshiarpur 1965), p. 163 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 86 ff.).

17. Grassmann, *Wörterbuch*, 1326, relying on an incorrect etymology?

18. Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 41. Dumont, in *Tr. Amer. Phil. Soc.* 106, p. 252, n. 20 prefers "is turned".

off, pull up and let fall or throw down what has been plucked” (“abdrehen, ausraufen”, Petr. Dict.)<sup>19</sup> and it would seem that this meaning is appropriate; see also 7, 2, 4; 7, 39, 2. In 7, 2, 4 the words *prá vr̥ñjate ... barhír agnáu* were translated: “legen sie das Barhis um das Feuer” (Geldner) and “(les prêtres) poussent en avant la Litière pour Agni” (Renou); it would seem that “throw down in the neighbourhood of the fire” is more exact; “in the direction of the fire” would be possible, or also “on account of ..., for the sake of ...” (*nimittasaptamī*)? Likewise 6, 11, 5 *vr̥ñjé<sup>20</sup> ha yán námasā barhír agnáu*, where Geldner again translates “... um Agni” and Renou, disregarding the caesura, connects *agnáu* and the following *dyāmi* “est offerte à Agni ...”, unnecessarily, because *agnáu* can, in this position, syntactically belong to what precedes and to what follows. Notice also that in 2, 3, 4 the *barhis* is said to have been spread *védy asyām*, which can hardly mean something else than “on this *vedī*” (likewise Geldner and Renou)<sup>21</sup>. And that in 3, 4, 4 not only the flames of the fire are said to set out into the space (above the earth) but also two other entities, addressed with “you both” (*vām*); following Sāyaṇa modern translators have rightly taken this to refer to Agni (cf. *pāda c*) and the *barhis*; the latter is indeed regarded as a divine being (cf., e.g., 2, 3, 4; 10, 70, 4). Rather than supposing the *barhis* to be a means of bringing the gods back to the heavenly regions one should consider this place a reference to burning the grass after the performance of the rites. From 5, 5, 4 it appears that the *barhis* is spread after the chanting of the hymns has begun. It is spread carefully (7, 2, 4), prudently (cf. 1, 13, 5), and “with authority and (or) creative activity” (*ojasā*<sup>22</sup>, 1, 188, 4), whilst squatting (“on the knees”, 7, 2, 4), because it is a ritual or religious action<sup>23</sup> (notice the following *namasā* “reverentially”). From the adjective *surabhi* “fragrant” in 10, 70, 4 it may probably be inferred that the grass should be fresh<sup>24</sup>.

In 7, 7, 3 the words “for the *barhis* has been arranged well” are preceded by “the sacrifice is turned towards the east”; in fact the *barhis* has been spread in that direction, but this is decisive for the performance as a whole<sup>25</sup>. In a prayer addressed

19. See ch. IX, n. 26, above. Why should we in RV. 1, 63, 7 referring to Indra’s conquering Sudās’ enemies prefer “umwarfst” (“wie Opferstreu”, Grassmann), “renversas” (Renou, E.V.P. XVII, p. 27) to “den Hals brechen” (Petr. Dict., RV. 6, 18, 8; 6, 26, 3)? The meaning of the verb allows the poet of 1, 116, 2 to say “I place (the milk) on the fire like the *barhis*” (*barhír iva prá vr̥ñje*).

20. See Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 131 and p. 44.

21. Also Potdar, Sacrifice, p. 75. It may be observed that Sāyaṇa on 1, 13, 9 explains *barhiḥ vedyām āsīnam* (likewise on 2, 36, 3).

22. For the almost untranslatable *ojasā* see J. Gonda, Ancient-Indian ojas, Utrecht 1952, p. 10 f. (I would now lay somewhat more emphasis on the nuance “authority”). Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 42 prefers “avec une force-formidable” considering the gods to be the subject of the sentence; why?

23. Cf. RV. 1, 72, 5; this posture is otherwise natural in this connexion; Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 46 prefers “portant (l’offrande) à genoux” (whilst spreading the *barhis*?).

24. In the simile RV. 7, 18, 11 the verb used to denote the energetic cutting down of the grass for preparing a seat as well as the felling of the enemies is *nī śīśāti*, one of those cases in which the meaning of the preverb modifies that of the verb (*śīśāti* “to sharpen”) to a considerable degree. As to the simile see also 1, 63, 7; Geldner quotes Mbh. 3, 120, 17: the earth covered with the killed and beheaded enemies resembles a *vedī* covered with *kuśāh*.

25. Sāyaṇa gives three explanations of *prācīno yajñāh*, viz. *samyag anuṣṭhiyate, yajñāh = yaṣṭā hotā, yajñāh = haviḥ*.

to Rudra to spare those speaking the god is besought to allow them to participate in the *barhis* and in the eulogy of the living (men), following Sāyaṇa, Geldner translated *barhiṣi* by “sacrificial worship” (*yajñe*); this is of course not incorrect but this *pars pro toto*<sup>26</sup> shows the importance of the sacrificial grass (7, 46, 4); similarly, 8, 31, 6. In 9, 95, 2 *soma* is said to reveal the secret names of the gods that they will be made known on the *barhis* (again unnecessarily *yajñe*, Sāyaṇa, “Opferplatz”, Geldner). In 1, 83, 6 the *barhis* is indeed supposed to have the effect of the performance of the sacrificial ritual: “when the *barhis* is gathered and thrown down (*vrjyate*) with a view to (the acquisition of) good offspring”. This is one of the main purposes of sacrificing: see 3, 19, 3; 4, 2, 11 (Agni being addressed). In 5, 5, 4 the *barhis* is besought to assist those speaking in deriving benefit. When in 5, 62, 5 Varuṇa and Mitra – or rather the *adhvaryu* and an assistant – are described as protecting the *barhis* with formulae they virtually protect the sacrifice as a whole<sup>27</sup>. Also 7, 75, 8; 10, 131, 2 (TS. 1, 8, 21 d etc.)<sup>28</sup>.

The difficult passage ṚV. 8, 102, 13 f. gives us interesting information on the procedure. In the early morning, when Vāyu, the morning-wind<sup>29</sup>, is blowing, the *barhis* – which obviously has already been gathered – has not yet been covered or thrown down (? *avṛtam*<sup>30</sup>) and fastened together (*asaṃdīnam*<sup>31</sup>)<sup>32</sup>. It is moreover described as consisting of three layers (*tridhātu*<sup>33</sup>), which may attest to the existence in the ṛgvedic period of the threefold arrangement (*tridhātu*) of the *barhis* described, for instance, at BhŚ. 2, 8, 13 and ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 2: “he strews the *barhis* in three or five layers, ending the strewing either towards the east or towards the west”, that is, he strews the grass on three sides of the *vedi*<sup>34</sup>. However, in this stanza no mention is made of a *vedi*, but the *barhis* is said to belong to Agni who is referred to by the pronoun *yasya*. Nor does the stanza refer to a *barhis* that surrounds the fire. One

26. Cf. RV. 5, 18, 4.

27. See Geldner, RV. übers. II, p. 71; Renou, E.V.P. V, p. 78.

28. Hence also explications such as *barhiṣi: asmin karmani* (Sāyaṇa on RV. 1, 12, 4) or *barhiḥ: yajñah* (on 1, 26, 4; 8, 1, 8; 8, 87, 2).

29. See J. Gonda, The dual deities in the religion of the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1974, p. 226 f.

30. Literally “uncovered” (= *anāvṛtam*, Sāyaṇa; “unbeschränkt, ungehemmt”, Petr. Dict., “unchecked”, Monier-Williams, “unbeschränkt”, Grassmann, “unbedeckt”, Geldner), or perhaps “not (yet) arranged orderly and covered by the objects and persons, deities that are to be placed on it – KŚ. 2, 7, 22 makes mention of other grass covering the (first) grass-bunch (*anyair avachādyā: anyair barhiṣṭṛṇāis ... prachādyā*) – or to be seated on it”? The supposition that *vṛtam* stands for *vṛktam* (Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 14; cf. Geldner, RV. übers. II, p. 433 and see VS. 28, 12 *barhiḥ ... vastor* (in the early morning) *vṛtam*, where the comm. explain *vṛtam* by *lūnam* “cut off, plucked”) is indeed very tempting.

31. i.e. *abaddham* (Sāyaṇa), “ungebunden” (Grassmann), “non liée ensemble” (Renou), but “unge-schnitten” (*ḍā-* “to divide, cut”, Geldner, improbably); see also Wackernagel and Debrunner, Altind. Grammatik, II, 2, p. 554; 726. Renou, op. cit., p. 159 refers to TS. 1, 8, 9, 3 *svayamdīnam barhiḥ*, where however the translation “self-cut” is intelligible. On *dīna* etc. see also J. Gonda, in Acta Or. (Lugd.) 14 (1936), p. 195 (= S.S. III, p. 35).

32. Geldner, l. cit. regards these words as a reference to the speaker’s indigence.

33. This is no doubt the first meaning of this compound which can also mean “consisting of three (constituent) parts or elements, threefold” (“dreifach”, Geldner, cf. Sāyaṇa: *trih*).

34. See Caland, Śr. Āpast. I, p. 59 f. It would seem that references to RV. 1, 47, 4 or BhŚ. 8, 1, 14; ĀpŚ. 8, 1, 11; VaikhŚ. 8, 3: 81, 5 *tredhā prasūmayam barhiḥ sannaddham* should be omitted.

might rather compare ṚV. 3, 9, 9 = 10, 52, 6 “they sprinkled him (Agni) with (drops of) ghee, spread the *barhis* for him, and installed him in the office of a *hotar*”, which shows that the spreading of the *barhis* is essential to a correct functioning of the ritual fire but omits any particulars regarding the way in which or the place where the grass is spread. It would seem that the installation takes place on the newly spread grass<sup>35</sup>: see 6, 11, 10; 5, 11, 2 (discussed above). As to the second half of 8, 102, 14, the words *āpaś cin nī dadhō padām* were translated: “Selbst ihr Gewässer habt eure Spur hinterlassen” (Geldner), and “(vous) mêmes, les Eaux, avez tenu cachée (sa) trace” (Renou). The expression *nī dadhe padām* is well known: ṚV. 1, 22, 17 “has set down his foot” (Geldner as above), or “has left his trace” (in the literal sense); see also 1, 164, 7; 3, 7, 7; 5, 3, 3; 10, 51, 1. In any case the “foot” or “trace” always belongs to the subject of the sentence or to the qualified element of the word group<sup>36</sup>. The meaning may therefore be “even the water has left its trace”, i.e. “its footprint is still visible (because it has been sprinkled recently)”. This is a reference to the custom to sprinkle the sacred grass (cf. ṚV. 8, 39, 10; KŚ. 4, 13, 16; 1, 3, 1 ff.). – For the sprinkling of the sacrificial material on the *barhis* – not of the grass – see ṚV. 10, 90, 7 *tām yajñām barhiṣi praukṣan pūruṣam* “they (the gods) sprinkled (consecrated) that sacrifice on the *barhis*, (namely) the Puruṣa”.

There can be no doubt that Indra-and-Agni invited to sit down and drink conjointly of the *soma* (1, 108, 3) are supposed to take seats on the *barhis*. Stanza 4 provides us with the following additional information: when the fires have been ignited, and when they have been anointed with the *soma*<sup>37</sup>, the sacrificial ladle has been stretched out (to you) and the *barhis* has been spread<sup>38</sup>, the gods are expected to give evidence of their satisfaction and benevolence. The verbal forms etc. are not placed in a chronological order: the deities are of course expected to sit down after the *barhis* has been spread and to drink the *soma* when they are seated. In the Indra hymn 1, 177, 4 the order in which the stages of the ceremony are enumerated is: the sacrificial worship (*yajña*) that is expected to come into contact with the gods<sup>39</sup>, the preparation of the sacrificial food (*miyedha*), the sacred texts (*brahmāṇi*), the *soma*, the *barhis* that has been spread, the invitation to come, take a seat and drink addressed to the god. In 7, 43, 2: “the *yajña* must begin, hold up the ladies (containing the ghee), spread the *barhis*, the flames are going upwards”. For less elaborate invitations see 1, 135, 1 “the *barhis* has been spread, come to enjoy the full draught ...; the dainty drink has come to advance towards thee (*prā te ... asthiran*)”, i.e. “... stands in readiness ...”; 3, 35, 7 “the *barhis* has been spread, the *soma* has been pressed”; 3, 41, 2 “the *barhis* has been spread, the stones are ready to work”; simi-

35. This is also Mādhava's opinion (on 3, 9, 9): *anantaram eva tasmin barhiṣi hotāram agnim nyasādayanta. Sāyaṇa* explains (3, 9, 9): *barhiṣiṣṭarānam vedyācchādanam akurvan*.

36. According to Renou, 1. cit. the first word of st. 15 *padām* (viz. of Agni) is a mere repetition of the last word of st. 14, the sentence being continued. Since, however, the *pada* in st. 15 is compared to the sun, it can hardly be concealed; normally, the traces of fire are ashy and dark.

37. Cf. ṚV. 3, 40, 6 and also 1, 151, 8; 1, 153, 2; 8, 39, 1.

38. On the construction see Geldner, op. cit. I, p. 140 and Renou, E.V.P. XIV, p. 121.

39. For *devayā* see J. Gonda, in *Journal Or. Inst. Baroda*, 15 (1966), p. 307 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 303 ff.).

larly, 10, 35, 9. But also 6, 63, 3 *soma* juice has been prepared, the *barhis* has been spread; likewise 8, 93, 25. In 1, 101, 9 *soma* has been pressed and an oblation made for Indra, who thereupon is invited to get drunk on the *barhis*. The *soma* juice is indeed pressed (9, 72, 4, and prepared: 1, 47, 4; 1, 173, 1) or placed ready on the *barhis* (*sulāso ādhi barhiṣi*, for Indra 1, 16, 6; 8, 17, 11; cf. 8, 69, 5; 9, 87, 1; 4; for the Maruts 1, 86, 4; cf. also 9, 19, 3). There are also the oblations offered to the Fathers (10, 15, 11). See also the simile in 7, 13, 1 from which it may be inferred that oblations were made on the *barhis*. However, in 9, 55, 2 the “birth” of *Soma*’s juice unmistakably precedes the invitation addressed to this deity to sit down on the *barhis*; see also 9, 59, 3; 9, 71, 6<sup>40</sup>.

It is further worth noticing that in 7, 17, 1 Agni (that is, the ritual fire) is requested “to be ignited with good firewood and the *barhis* must be spread to a great extent”: two actions which are obviously to be performed in close connexion. In 8, 45, 1 mention is only made of kindling the fire and spreading the *barhis*.

From 7, 21, 2 “they (the officiants) come to the sacrifice; they cause the *barhis* to tremble” it may be inferred that the stones for pressing the *soma*, characterized as “intoxicated with *soma*”, which tremble and make the *barhis* tremble, are placed on the layer of grass (Geldner). – In 10, 30, 14 it is explicitly said that the water needed for the preparation of the *soma* and brought to the sacrificial place must be put on the *barhis* (*nī barhiṣi dhattana*). In 7, 44, 2 it is clearly stated that the holy libation (*iṭam devīm*) which is to be consumed by the gods and those participating in the sacrifice is placed on the *barhis* (*barhiṣi sādāyantah*) by those who wish to invoke the Aśvins.

The stanza 4, 6, 4 does not put the position of the *barhis* in relation to the fire beyond doubt: *sūrṇé barhiṣi* (cf. 2, 11, 16) *samidhāné agnā ūrdhvó adhvarīyūr ... asthāt*. Is *samidhāné agnāu* a locative of the place where (Geldner: “auf dem ... Barhis vor dem ... Feuer”) or an absolute locative (Sāyaṇa, who identifies *barhis* with *vedi*, Renou: “... tandis qu’on allume Agni”<sup>41</sup>)? It is of course possible to regard both locatives as absolute and co-ordinated – cf. 5, 37, 2 *samidhāgnīr vanavat sūrṇābarhiḥ* ... – “when the *barhis* has been spread and the fire has been kindled, the *adhvaryu* has stood up (assumed an erect position)”. If, however, *barhiṣi* is a locative indicating the place where the officiant does so, the interruption of the construction by an absolute locative is strange. One might perhaps, with some hesitation, propose: “the *adhvaryu* has stood up on the *barhis* near the fire”, but other unmistakable ṛgvedic references to the *barhis* being spread as a seat or stand for men are not found. The adjective *barhiṣad* is an epithet of gods (Indra, 2, 3, 3; Dawn and Dusk, 7, 2, 6), the Fathers (10, 15, 3; 4) and of the *soma* juice (9, 68, 1; also *barhiṣthā*, 3, 42, 2).

The line *agnīr ukthé puróhito grāvāṇo barhīr adhvaré* states that Agni – who is often

40. See also RVKh. VII, 1 e *hotā yakṣad barhis suṣṭarīma*.

41. Renou, E.V.P. XIII, p. 11. In the early Vedic period the use of the absolute locative is almost wholly confined to the expression of temporal relations (cf. H. Oertel, The syntax of cases in ... the brāhmaṇas, I. Heidelberg 1926, p. 295).



said to fulfil the function of a protector – has been placed before (i.e. has been charged with) the eulogy (i.e. the oral ritual), (while the) pressing stones and the *barhis* (are charged) with the (manual) rites (8, 27, 1)<sup>42</sup>. It is also clear that all three, eulogy, stones and *barhis* are on the occasion of a *soma* sacrifice absolutely indispensable. Only when the *barhis* and the stones have been put in readiness can the officiant with his sacred stanzas (*ṛcā*, *pāda* c) apply to the gods for their favour and assistance. The eulogy praises, i.e. strengthens and persuades them to come, the stones prepare the oblation, the *barhis* is the place where this must be consumed.

The rather frequent *bahuvrīhi vr̥ktabarhis* is often employed to qualify sacrificers: 1, 14, 5 the Kāṇvas, who have “gathered and put down the *barhis*, have (are prepared to offer) oblations, make ready (the other necessities of the sacrifice)”<sup>43</sup>; 8, 5, 17. Also 1, 40, 7 (co-ordinated with *devayanlam* “turning to the gods”); 3, 2, 5 (followed by “stretching out the sacrificial ladle”); 5, 23, 3 (: *lūnabarhiṣaḥ*, Sāyaṇa) where it is virtually equivalent to “sacrificers”; 5, 35, 6 (: *ācchāditadarbhāḥ*, Sāyaṇa, “bei umgelegten Barhis”<sup>44</sup>, Geldner ambiguously); 8, 6, 37; 8, 33, 1 (having pressed the *soma* and gathered the *barhis* which may mean “ready to sacrifice”; cf. 2, 12, 3; 3, 59, 9; 6, 68, 1; 8, 36, 1; 8, 87, 3; 8, 97, 1); 8, 69, 18 (followed by “having made an oblation of food”, also 8, 60, 17); 10, 91, 9. In 8, 27, 7 the order of the actions is: *barhis*, oblation of food, pressing of the *soma*, invocation after having kindled the fire. In 1, 38, 1; 8, 7, 20; 21 the meaning is “for whom the *barhis* is placed”. – The stanza 3, 2, 6 is of special interest: *tāva hī kṣāyam pāri hōtar yajñēṣu vr̥ktabarhiṣo nāraḥ ... upāsate* “O hotar (Agni), the men who have placed down the *barhis* are at the sacrifices seated around thy dwelling”. The text does not explicitly state that these men are seated on the *barhis* (this is Geldner’s translation<sup>45</sup>) and the verb can also mean, or imply “do homage, worship”. If we take Geldner’s translation of 5, 9, 2 *agnīr hōtā dāsavataḥ kṣāyasya vr̥ktabarhiṣaḥ* (“... des ... Hauses, in dem das Barhis umgelegt wird”) literally, the *barhis* is laid in the house of the sacrificer (this is most improbable) or the sacrificial ground belongs to the “house” (this is possible); yet, it is preferable to translate with Renou “the house of the one who has placed the *barhis*”. – In 10, 21, 1 mention is made of a sacrifice (*yajña*) for which the *barhis* has been spread (*sfirṇa*). The other occurrence of *sfirṇabarhiḥ* (5, 37, 2) has already been quoted.

The compound *barhiṣmant* “having, furnished with, characterized by (a) *barhis*” qualifies persons (sacrificers etc., RV. 1, 51, 8; 1, 53, 6; 5, 3, 12; 8, 70, 14; 9, 44, 4) and once the oblation (1, 117, 1).

From the above complete survey of the relevant ṛgvedic texts it is sufficiently clear what in this corpus (a) *barhis* is – a seat for the gods (and the Fathers) who are invited to the sacrifice, and a place on which the oblations offered to them and

42. See Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 106 and Geldner, Rig-Veda übers. II, p. 338.

43. See J. Gonda, New Ind. Ant., extra series, I (Bombay 1939), p. 100 (= S.S. II, p. 260); Renou, E.V.P. V, p. 14.

44. In 1, 3, 3 Geldner adds to his translation of the compound “um das Opferfeuer” (op. cit. I, p. 4 n.).

45. Renou’s is more cautious (E.V.P. XII, p. 51).

some objects used in preparing these oblations are put down – and what in all probability it was not – a seat or stand for the officiant and the patron of the sacrifice<sup>46</sup>. The texts give no information on the use of *barhis* in contemporaneous rites that are not described or referred to in this corpus. Nor do they give a decisive answer to the question as to whether or not (a) *barhis* was at the time of the ṛgvedic poets also in profane use. Such a use is not beyond probability, however, first because it is mentioned – it is true, at a later date – (MīmS. 1, 4, 10), in the second place because, as we have seen, non-ritual use of other grasses did occur, and lastly because the word *barhis* is etymologically identical with avestan *barəziš* which means “cushion, stuffed seat” as a piece of household furniture<sup>47</sup>.

Semantically, the not very numerous Indian nouns in *-is*<sup>48</sup> form no unity, but some of them constitute small groups of words of more or less related meanings (e.g. *jyotis* “light”, *rocis* “light, lustre”, *śocis* “flame, glow, radiance”); thus *barhis* is on one hand semantically related with avest. *stairiš* “straw, place to lie upon, bed”, which belongs to *star-* “to spread”<sup>49</sup> and ved. *sādhis* “seat, place” which is formally identical with OPers. *hadīš* “dwelling, palace”<sup>50</sup> and on the other with *havis* “oblation”. Etymologically, the word *barhis*/*barəziš* is not clear. The etymology which has more than once been suggested<sup>51</sup>, viz. relationship with goth. *balgs* “skin made into a bag” (also in Dutch *blaasbalg* “bellows” etc.), and the assumption of a common root *bhelgh-* “to blow up, to (cause to) swell” are unconvincing, because grass spread and used to lie upon or to bear implements is not blown up and ordinarily does not swell. It would therefore seem that it is neither possible to argue that the indo-iranian *\*barzhis* originally was only used in the ritual sphere – and that, consequently, avest. *barəziš* has “lost its religious significance”<sup>52</sup>, nor to contend that it “originally” was exclusively employed for profane purposes<sup>53</sup>. Anyhow, the hypothesis

46. But see the above discussions of RV. 10, 35, 10; 4, 6, 4 and 3, 2, 6.

47. For references see Chr. Bartholomae, *Altiranisches Wörterbuch*, Strassburg 1904, p. 905 f.; for related Iranian words G. Morgenstierne, in *Norsk Tidsskrift for Sprogvidenskap* 5, p. 41; Mayrhofer, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, II, p. 415. It should, however, always be remembered that conclusions drawn from a comparatively small corpus such as the Avesta and from other Iranian sources run the risk of being *argumenta e silentio*.

48. I refer to J. Wackernagel and A. Debrunner, *Altindische Grammatik*, II, 2, Göttingen 1954, p. 364 ff.

49. Wackernagel and Debrunner, op. cit. II, 2, p. 366 advance the opinion that, under the influence of *\*stariš*, *barhis* replaces *\*barhas* (which would be a more common formation; another *\*barhas* (belonging to *bṛhat* “firm”) occurs in *dvibarhas* “doubly firm, strong” (cf. J. Gonda, *Zur Homonymie im Altindischen*, *Acta Or.* (Lugd.) 14, p. 161 ff. (= S.S. III, p. 1 ff.)).

50. See also Mayrhofer, op. cit. III, p. 424.

51. See, e.g., H. Hirt, in *Idg. Forsch.* 32, p. 232; H. Willman-Grabowska, in *Symbolae Rozwadowski* 2 (1928), p. 167 ff.; A. Walde and J. Pokorny, *Vergl. Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*, II, Berlin and Leipzig 1927, p. 182 f.; S. Feist, *Vergl. Wörterbuch der Gotischen Sprache*, Leiden 1939, p. 78; Mayrhofer, op. cit. II, p. 415 f.; Debrunner, op. cit., *Nachträge zu Band I*, Göttingen 1957, p. 116.

52. E. Benveniste, *The Persian religion according to the chief Greek texts*, Paris 1929, p. 31.

53. As to av. *barəsmān* the name of the grasses and consecrated twigs used by the Iranians for religious purposes, P. Thieme, in *Zs. d. deutschen morgenl. Ges.* 107 (1957), p. 73 f. has overlooked the fact that indo-eur. words in *-men-* often denote some power or other, especially when this power manifests itself either as such or in objects, phenomena, processes etc. believed to be bearers of power (lat. *numen*, *carmen*, skt. *dhāman*, *brāhman*, *brāhman*) including objects used in the cult of the gods (e.g. ved. *homan* “oblation poured out into the fire”); see W. Porzig, in *Ind. Forsch.* 42, p.

that grass was already by the common ancestors of several indo-european peoples gathered and spread for ritual purposes<sup>54</sup> is not absurd<sup>55</sup>.

223 ff.; J. Gonda, *Old Indian*, Leiden 1971, p. 51. – It may perhaps be surmised that there is no sanskrit counterpart of this Iranian word because of the possibility of homonymy with – a strong resemblance to – *brahman* (see above, n. 49) with which it is, also in my opinion, not related.

As to the Iranian *baršman* and its use see Bartholomae, *Wörterbuch*, 947 ff. (with references to the texts etc.); A. Christensen, *Kulturgeschichte des alten Orients*, in *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft*, herausg. von W. Otto, München 1933, p. 230; G. Widengren, *Die Religionen Irans*, Stuttgart 1965, p. 29; M. Boyce, *A history of Zoroastrianism*, I, Leiden 1975, p. 167 (where has the author found that in India this custom was “conceivably also an acknowledgement that all flesh is grass?”); II, Leiden 1982, p. 38 f.; 276 f. etc. It is spread or strewn (*star-, fra-star-*, compare the Vedic *prastara*), the officiant standing behind it – see also Herodotus I, 132 “the worshipper lays the flesh of the victim on a little heap of soft green-stuff, preferably clover” – , but also held in the hand (*baršmōzasta*) by those who pray, worship the deity, recite etc., in a way corresponding to the *pavitra*s of *kusa* or *darbha* in Vedic antiquity.

54. Compare L. von Schroeder, *Arische Religion*, II, Leipzig 1916, p. 307 ff.; F. Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion*, Stuttgart 1961, p. 73 f.

55. One of the words quoted in these discussions – e.g. by Willman-Grabowska, l.c., according to whom it expresses the profane meaning of av. *baršiš* – is *upabarhaṇam* (once, *RV.* I, 174, 7, *upabarhaṇi*) “pillow, cushion”. From none of the occurrences it appears, however, that it was made of, or contained grass, although this is, of course, not improbable. It was, indeed, in use for purposes which modern men would regard as ‘profane’, but had, at least in part of its occurrences, also a religious or ceremonial significance. In *RV.* 10, 85 (AVŚ. 14), describing the wedding of Sūrya, the prototype of any human bride, heaven and earth were the interior part (of the bridal carriage) and attentiveness or perception (*citti*) the *upabarhaṇa* of that carriage (*RV.* st. 7; AVŚ. st. 6); according to *BD.* 7, 123 this stanza belongs to a passage which deals with the transformation of existing (positive) entities for the benefit of Sūryā (*sūryāyai bhāvavṛttam*). In *RV.* I, 174, 7 the earth has been made an *upabarhaṇa* (*śayyā* “bed”, *Sāyaṇa*) for a demon (who has been killed). When a wooden bench was brought for the *vṛātya* (the representative of an unorthodox errant Aryan group), it appeared that the seasons were its feet, the Veda the covering (*āstarahaṇa*, which may have consisted of grass), *brāhman* the *upabarhaṇa*, the *sāman* the seat (*āsada*, AVŚ. 15, 3, 7). Eulogizing the gift of a goat and so on the author of AVŚ. 9, 5, 29 says that the one who gives a milch-cow, a draught-ox, an *upabarhaṇa*, a garment etc. goes to the highest heaven, and creates the impression that an *upabarhaṇa* is not only an object of value but also fit to be ceremoniously offered as a gift. According to *BhŚ.* 5, 12, 15 the patron should give to the *āgnīdhra* a pillow made of threads of all (variegated colours); *ApŚ.* 5, 20, 7 adds a goat and a potful of grains (rice); in *MS.* 1, 6, 4; 62, 21; *KS.* 28, 4; 157, 17; *KapS.* 44, 4; 259, 18 such an *upabarhaṇa* is said to be a manifestation of the Vedic metrical texts (*chandasa*), and is given in order to secure these (in *TB.* 1, 1, 6, 10 the gift is meant to obtain the forms or manifestations, figures, phenomena (*rūpa*)); see also *ApŚ.* 13, 6, 1. In AVŚ. 9, 6 (AVP. 16, 111–117), which deals with the significance of the entertainment of guests and identifies this with acts and requisites of the *śrauta* ritual, ointment is said to represent the sacrificial butter and the mattress (*kaśipu*) and the *upabarhaṇa* the sticks that are laid around the sacred fire (*paridhī*, st. 10, also AVP. 16, 111, 10). In a description of the royal throne of Indra, *AiB.* 8, 12, 3 and in the almost identical description of the throne of a king 8, 17, 2 – in both cases used on the occasion of their consecration – the goddess of prosperity (*Śrī*) is said to be the *upabarhaṇa*, i.e. cushion or pillow on which their heads rest (comm.) and fame or renown (*yaśasa*) the coverlet. Likewise *JB.* 2, 25. One of the elements of the elaborate rite for damping the fire that has come into contact with a deceased person described in *MG.* 2, 1 etc. (see M.J. Dresden, *Mānavagṛhyasūtra*, Thesis Utrecht 1941, p. 108 ff.) consists in the putting down of a mat or skin with the ashes to the accompaniment of a stanza in which the headache is said to be allayed on an *upabarhaṇa* (see AVŚ. 12, 2, 20; AVP. 17, 31, 10; *KG.* 45, 7; *VGP.* 1, 8; cf. also AVŚ. 12, 2, 19 (AVP. 17, 31, 9) “wipe off on the lead, on the reed”; 71, 16 dealing with a purification by means of lead and black wool; 86, 19); on this mat or skin one throws the *upabarhaṇa* (used by the dead person when he was ill, comm. on *KG.*) and a piece of lead and then cleanses oneself above it, whilst pronouncing a prayer for release addressed to *Varuṇa* (for the purificatory and protective power of lead see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 141; for a cure for headache which actually is an exorcism, p. 260). As appears from the mantra (AVŚ.; *KG.*; *VGP.*) the impurity is to be allayed on the lead, the headache on the cushion. See also *Krick*, *Feuergründung*, p. 68 n.

The information the ṛgvedic texts give on the spot where the *barhis* is spread is scanty. There is only one place where it is most probably said to have been put on the *vedi* (2, 3, 4)<sup>56</sup>, but it does not follow that the reader has always, without further information, to understand that this was the only, or even the usual place as seems to be Oldenberg's opinion<sup>57</sup>. Nor do the texts, in spite of Geldner's translations, explicitly state that the *barhis* is strewn round the fire. But it is clear that the grass was spread near the fire. In any case, the conclusion seems warranted that it could be placed, for instance between the fire and the *vedi*<sup>58</sup>.

Finally, the fact that the word *darbha* is all but wanting in the Ṛgveda cannot, I think, be disconnected from the decided preference of its poets for *barhis*.

56. Cf. P. Thieme in Gött. Gel. Anz. 209, p. 212 (= Kleine Schriften, Wiesbaden 1971, p. 691).
57. Oldenberg, *Rel. des Veda*, p. 344, n. 3. His references to A. Hillebrandt, *Das altindische Neund Vollmondsopfer*, Jena 1880, p. 71 and J. Schwab, *Das altindische Thieropfer*, Erlangen 1886, p. 64 f.; 115 cannot replace conclusive ṛgvedic evidence. Formulations such as "in the Indian rite the *vedi* is strewn with grass, now called *kusá* but formerly *barhis*" (Boyce, *A history of Zoroastrianism*, I, p. 167) are inexact.
58. See the plan of the sacrificial place in Krick, *Feuergründung*, p. 66.

## B. BARHIS IN THE ATHARVAVEDA

Most of the occurrences of the word *barhis* in the Atharvaveda-Saṃhitās give the same or similar information. Bharatī, Iḍā and Sarasvatī are requested to sit down “on this agreeable or soft” (*syona*) *barhis* (AVŚ. 5, 12, 8; ṚV. 10, 110, 8 and elsewhere); also AVŚ. 5, 27, 9 (AVP. 9, 1, 9; VS. 27, 19; cf. also MS. 2, 12, 6: 150, 6 etc.). See also AVŚ. 7, 58, 2 (AVP. 20, 6, 6); 20, 49, 3 (AVP. 19, 45, 15); 18, 1, 59 (ṚV. 10, 14, 5) Yama. In AVŚ. 5, 26, 6 (AVP. 9, 2, 6) Aditi is said to have come with *barhis* and sprinkling water, extending the sacrifice. – Mention of a *barhis* for the Fathers is made in AVŚ. 18, 1, 42, where they are invited to revel on it; see also 18, 3, 44; 18, 4, 46. In 18, 4, 51 (TĀ. 6, 7, 2) the *barhis* is brought forward (*pra-bhr-*) for them, but there follows the interesting statement that “a living, higher one is strewn for the gods” and a person addressed as *puruṣa* (man) is invited to sit down (*ā roha*) there (i.e. on the latter *barhis*), becoming ritually pure (fit for sacrificing, *medhyaḥ*). This stanza is intended in Kauś. 80, 51, the comm. explaining that its first half is to be muttered when *darbha* is strewn upon the wood of the funeral pile and the second when the corpse is laid on its back upon the grass thus strewn. That the deceased person is meant is also apparent from AVŚ. 18, 4, 52 “thou hast sat down upon this *barhis*, thou hast become *medhyaḥ*”. In AVŚ. 18, 3, 20 the Atris (a Vedic family), Aṅgīrasas (an ancient family of priests) and Navagnas (a mythic family coupled with the former), being described as sacrificers, bestowers, rich in *dakṣiṇās* and ritual merit (*sukṛtaḥ*) are likewise invited to revel “on this *barhis*”, no doubt also after they have been admitted into the category of deceased ancestors. In AVŚ. 10, 10, 12; 17 (AVP. 16, 108, 2; 6) Atharvan even sat on a golden *barhis*.

In AVŚ. 12, 3, 32 (AVP. 17, 39, 2) the gods and female divine ones are invited to settle together on a new *barhis* which has been strewn for the rice-dish (*odana*). In st. 33 (AVP. 3) a forest tree – probably a wooden vessel (cf. Kauś. 61, 43) – is requested to do likewise<sup>1</sup>. In st. 31 (1) those concerned are enjoined to cut the grass quickly without harming it lest the plants should get angry (cf. Kauś. 61, 38 f.). Vait. 10, 7 seems to show a more original application of this stanza: there it accompanies the laying down of the sacrificial post upon the *barhis*. This rite is not mentioned elsewhere<sup>2</sup> and so we may raise the question of the place of this *barhis*.

Exalting the entertainment of guests the author of AVŚ. 9, 6, 8 (AVP. 16, 111, 9) regards the strewing of a couch (*yád upastrīṅanti*) equivalent to a *barhis*, which obviously is, at least normally, not destined for human beings. Kauś. 65, 3 prescribes the spreading of the hairs of a cow that is to be offered to the accompaniment of AVŚ. 10, 9, 2 a–c (AVP. 16, 136, 2)<sup>3</sup> “... thy hairs must be the *barhis*”.

The four stanzas of AVP. 16, 122 inform us of the significance of the tearing off of the grass. If one tears it off towards the east it is intended for sacrificial worship and the gods; if towards the south, for Yama and the Fathers; if towards the west,

1. For particulars see J. Gonda, *The Savayajñas*, Amsterdam Acad. 1965, p. 83 and 175 f.

2. W. Caland, *Das Vaitānasūtra des Atharvaveda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1910, p. 29.

3. See Gonda, *Savayajñas*, p. 94; 262.



for Varuṇa who dwells in the waters; if towards the north, for Soma and the seven seers (the stars of the Ursa Major). – In AVP. 9, 23, 7 the *barhis* is one of the deities, objects etc. enumerated in a series of otherwise identical mantras in which they are said to have been purified. – The bull that is being eulogized in AVŚ. 9, 4, 10 (AVP. 16, 24, 10) and is identified with Indra has heaven and earth for a *barhis*.

From AVŚ. 10, 1, 18 (AVP. 16, 36, 8) it appears that the *barhis*, just as the *śmaśāna* (the place for burning dead bodies or burying the bones) and the field, was sometimes bewitched by burying a *kr̥tyā* (a figure made for magical purposes to work or inflict evil)<sup>4</sup> in it. This may help us to form an idea of the thickness of the *barhis*. – Another typically atharvanic use occurs in AVŚ. 5, 22, 1 (AVP. 13, 1, 1) where the ritual fire, Soma, Varuṇa, the *barhis*, the fuel etc. are enjoined to drive away the malarial fever from a patient (for the performance see Kauś. 29, 18 f.). Notice that the requisites, among them the *barhis*, are in this respect put on a par with Soma and Varuṇa.

AVŚ. 7, 98, 1 (AVP. 20, 34, 9) accompanies in Vait. 4, 6 the casting of the *prastara* into the fire on the occasion of one of the sacrifices of full and new moon. Also in Kauś. 6, 7, after stating in 6, 5 the anointing of the *barhis* with the remainder of the *ājya* and the distribution of its root, middle and top to the deities Earth, Atmosphere and Sky. The poet says that the *barhis* is anointed with oblation and ghee by Indra and other gods and expresses the wish that the oblation may go to Indra.

4. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 255 f.

## C. BARTHIS IN THE VĀJASANEYI-SAMHITĀ

It seems worth while briefly to survey the uses and functions of *barhis* recorded in one of the mantra collections of the Yajurveda<sup>1</sup>, while explaining these by means of internal evidence and putting off the ritual application and the ritualist interpretations – if there are any – to a later section.

From VS. 2, 1 it appears that the *barhis* is placed on the *vedi* and the sacrificial ladles are put on the *barhis*: “I sprinkle thee (the *vedi*) agreeable to the *barhis* ..., thee (the *barhis*) agreeable to the ladles”. (Cf. also TS. 1, 1, 11 c; MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 8 etc.). The sacrificial food is presented on the *barhis*: in 19, 57; 59 (RV. 10, 15, 11) the Fathers are invited to eat it (“on the *darbha*”, Mahīdhara). There is also the victim laid down (31, 9; RV. 10, 90, 7). In 2, 22 the *barhis* is said to be anointed with sacrificial food and ghee; in 19, 91 *barhis* and barley-corns are coupled and said to compose the eyebrows of Indra whose body is being restored (see also TB. 2, 6, 4, 5). With the *prastara*, the *paridhis*, the sacrificial spoon, the *vedi*, the *barhis* and the mantras Agni is besought to lead the sacrifice to the gods in heaven (18, 63). In 33, 7 (RV. 3, 9, 9), which belongs to a litany to Agni, the *barhis* is said to have been spread by the deities for this god for whom they have also sprinkled clarified butter. It is spread eastward in the early morning (29, 29; RV. 10, 110, 4). It is pleasant to tread on (for the gods, 33, 44; RV. 7, 39, 2). The wool-soft *barhis* is one of the deities and objects which the (divine) *hotar* (and his human counterpart) is in the series of stanzas 21, 29 ff. expected to worship (st. 33).

In 29, 4 Aditī is expected to bestow bliss, being pleased with the wide and broad *barhis* that is spread upon the earth and is connected (*yuktam*) with the gods<sup>2</sup>. Sarasvatī brought the *soma* which had been supplied by the Aśvins<sup>3</sup> together with the *barhis* (on which it was to be put down) to Indra for his drink (20, 59; MS. 3, 11, 3: 143, 18; TB. 2, 6, 12, 2 e etc.). In 20, 39 (TB. 2, 6, 8, 2 etc.) Indra is besought to sit down, facing east, on the soft or pleasant (*syona*) *barhis*, which is being spread and is anointed by the Ādityas and the Vasus, and to enjoy it. In 28, 4 (TB. 2, 6, 7, 2 d) the *hotar* is enjoined to worship this god who is sitting there together with the Vasus etc. and in 3 he is said to receive offerings. Likewise in 28, 27 (TB. 2, 6, 17, 3), where Indra, together with Pūṣan, is moreover *subarhis*. See also 2, 18 (SB. 1, 8, 3, 25); TB. 2, 8, 6, 5 etc.).

The poet of 21, 57 (TB. 3, 6, 13 j etc.) inserts a reference to the origin of the grass, offering Indra a pleasant seat, soft as wool, viz. a *barhis* – characterized as *deva* – of plants that grow near the water and stating that the Aśvins and Sarasvatī, who have spread it, have bestowed on him, together with the *barhis*, that psychical tension that induces fury (*manyu*) as well as physical and psychical power (*indriya*) in order to qualify him for dominion. Here the *barhis* is thought to be a sort of throne, an indispensable element of the process of bestowing a dignity on the person

1. Corresponding occurrences in the mantra collections other than the VS. can easily be found in the Vedic Concordance.

2. Likewise TS. 5, 1, 11 d; but MS. 3, 16, 2: 184, 5 reads “anointed (*aktam*) by the gods”.

3. See J. Gonda, Pūṣan and Sarasvatī, Amsterdam Acad. 1985, p. 21 ff.

who occupies it. This is in harmony with 28, 21 (TB. 2, 6, 10, 6): “the divine *barhis* of plants (*darbhāḥ*, Mahīdhara) which grow near the water has increased Indra’s power (caused him to prosper, *avardhayat*); (this is intelligible because) being Indra’s comfortable seat, it has surpassed all other *barhīmṣi*”. A similar opinion is expressed in 28, 12 (TB. 2, 6, 10, 1): spread by the gods on the *vedi* the *barhis* that abounds in (i.e. produces many) energetic men (viz. the gods<sup>4</sup>, *vīravat*) has increased Indra’s power; covered (cut?)<sup>5</sup> in the early morning, offered (*pra ... bhṛtam*)<sup>6</sup> at night, it has surpassed with wealth (i.e. through the wealth it brings with it) those (others) who have a *barhis*. The same thought is put into words at 28, 35 where the *barhis* is, moreover, declared to have, with (the help of) the *gāyatrī*<sup>7</sup>, placed physical and psychical power, eyesight and vigour (a vigorous age, *vayas*) in Indra. (See also 21, 48; MS. 3, 11, 5: 147, 1 etc.). Similarly, 28, 44 where the assisting metre is the *kakubh* and Indra is given, not eyesight but renown (*yaśas*). Notice that in ch. 28 the *barhis* is not the only divinized entity to which such power and functions are attributed. Mention of that peculiar power of the *barhis* is also made in VS. 19, 17. In this stanza, one of the mantras accompanying the *sautrāmaṇī* – which, characterized by the offering of *surā* instead of *soma*, is performed for purification, restoration – the *vedi* is stated to be a means of acquiring a *vedi* (viz. of a *soma* sacrifice, comm.), but the *barhis* acquires not only a *barhis* (of a *soma* sacrifice) but also *indriya* (see above)<sup>8</sup>. In 19, 32 the *sautrāmaṇī* is described as being characterized by *surā* and the presence of gods on the *barhis*.

In 10, 32 (see ŚB. 5, 5, 4, 24) mention is made of homage (*nama-ukti*) paid to the *barhis*, according to the comm. by the sacrificers who are standing on it, but this does not appear from the text. Also 19, 6; 23, 38. In 18, 21 the wish is expressed that the speaker’s sacrificial vessels, the pressing stones, the *vedi*, the *barhis* etc. may be well managed (be successful, favourable, *kalpantām*) on account of the sacrifice (the instrumental denoting the motive, Mahīdhara).

4. According to the comm. the officiants.

5. *vṛtam*, see n. 30, p. 144 above.

6. Otherwise: “kept in remembrance” (Uvaṭa).

7. The *gāyatrī* (metre) has fetched the *soma* from heaven (ŚB. 11, 7, 2, 8), bears the sacrificer to heaven or to bliss (11, 4, 1, 8; 12, 3, 4, 3), and is used when the sacrificial horse is anointed (13, 2, 6, 4).

8. Otherwise (*indriyam*, sc. *indriyaṇa*), Mahīdhara.

## D. THE BARHIS IN RITUAL PRACTICE

At the beginning of a sacrificial rite an order is given for sprinkling water, fuel and grass (to be spread etc., *darbhamayaṃ barhis*) to be brought "from wherever it may be found" (ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 5)<sup>1</sup>. Of the collected grass seven bundles are made, which are tied together. After having taken the *prastara*, which is to be put over the *darbha* of the *vedi*, from the eastern side the *adhvaryu* hands the gathered grass (*barhis*) to the *brahman*, and unfolds the tying grass (*saṃmahanam*) etc. (see below: three bunches are to cover the *vedi*). Another bundle is the *yajamānamuṣṭi* – this word does not occur in the Vedic ritual texts – which the patron himself keeps throughout the sacrifice. From another bunch, the *paribhojanī* – another term which seems to be foreign to these texts – the *adhvaryu* takes a handful for each priest and for the patron and his wife which they use as seats. The *veda* (broom) is the last bunch<sup>2</sup>.

(The) *barhis* is an essential element of the sacrifice. In this respect it is put on a par with the fuel. The author of ŚB. 1, 5, 1, 3 dissuades his readers from uttering the call for the *pravara* (the choosing of the *hotar*) after taking *barhis* (i.e. some grass of the *barhis*) from the covered (*stirṇa*) *vedi* or after taking a chip of wood, because that with which the fuel was tied together and with which the fire is swept (KŚ. 3, 1, 13) belongs also to the sacrifice; if one utters the call after taking that straw-band, one does the correct thing. – Notice also statements such as MS. 4, 1, 3: 4, 8 "on the day before they prepare the fuel and the *barhis*"; the command (e.g. BŚ. 10, 9: 8, 15 "set down the sprinkling water, bring the kindling sticks and the *barhis* grass"); KS. 25, 5: 107, 17 "he sprinkles fuel and *barhis*" (a *dvandva* compound); KS. 11, 4: 147, 19 as a result of a particular ritual action "the *barhis* becomes increased, the fuel larger, in order to promote complete prosperity". – The fuel and the *barhis* (a compound: *idhmābarhiḥ*) are placed (on the *vedi*) in order to form a union (*yuktyai*) and to supply the sacrifice with a productive pair (*yajñasya mithunatvāya*<sup>3</sup>, TB. 3, 2, 10, 2). After the *stambayajus* ceremony the *āgnīdhra* puts down sprinkling-water (in order to ward off the demons), fuel and *barhis* (the same compound) on the *vedi* (3, 2, 9, 14 f.). See also KŚ. 8, 6, 26 (cf. 28). – For *idhma*, *vedi* and *barhis* see also

1. The definition *kausam barhiḥ* "the *barhis* is made of *kuśa* grass" (KŚ. 1, 3, 12) is explained by the commentator as follows: "The *barhis* consists of *kuśa*, i.e. of *darbha*. The term *barhis* means merely (the) *kuśa* (grass) (see ch. III with n. 93) which has not been subjected to a *saṃskāra* (i.e. has not been purified, consecrated, made fit or perfected by a special rite), because through constant concomitance and simultaneous absence the term *barhis* denotes the genus (viz. *kuśa* grass). Wherever the term *barhis* is used there one refers in every case to the genus. In the Veda and in profane usage there is no exception to this rule". The commentator quotes KŚ. 6, 2, 18, where *barhiṃsi* denotes *kuśa* blades that are thrown into a hole, with the comment that these blades are not consecrated (*asamskrīta*), and from colloquial usage "the cows have taken *barhis* and have gone" (cf. TB. 2, 3, 2, 5). However, he continues, in the colloquial usage of regional dialects there appears to be an exception as to whether *barhis* is consecrated or not. (But compare, e.g., GG. 1, 5, 16 "the *barhis* consists of *kuśa* cut off at the points at which the blades diverge from the main stalk").
2. See M. Haug, *The Aitareya Brāhmaṇa of the Rīgveda*, II, Bombay 1863, p. 79; Eggeling, *Śat. Br.* I, p. 84, n. 2; Keith, *Veda Black Yajus School*, I, p. 12, n. 4.
3. For *mithunatvāya* see, e.g., TB. 2, 1, 2, 12; 3, 2, 2, 6; 3, 2, 9, 9. Not, as Dumont, *Proc. Am. Phil. Soc.* 101, p. 243: "for their pairing with the sacrifice (?)". Two or another even number are for copulation and procreation (3, 2, 2, 6).

VS. 2, 1; ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 1–3; KŚ. 2, 7, 19: sprinkling of fuel, *vedi* and *barhis*, for the same sequence also, e.g., BŚ. 5, 6: 135, 6.

The close association of *barhis* and *vedi* appears also from the fact that in the long enumeration of deities, concepts, substances, ritual requisites and so on occurring in the mantras of the *adhvaryu* for the so-called *vasor dhārā* oblation these two words follow each other immediately: MS. 2, 11, 5: 143, 9 *barhiś ca me vediś ca me*; TS. 4, 7, 8; VS. 18, 21; and MS. 3, 4, 1: 46, 1. See also RVKh. 5, 5, 7 and ŚŚ. 8, 21, 1 where mention is made of the gods who, worshipped everywhere, are also on the *barhis* and the *vedi* (... *ca* ... *ca*).

The strewing of the *barhis* is a critical moment which in certain circumstances is regarded as marking the beginning of the sacrificer's special observance. Some ritualists enjoin the patron of the sacrifice to undertake the vow or observance (*vratā*) before the fetching of the *barhis* when a full moon sacrifice is to be performed, and before the driving away of the calves – that is, at an earlier moment – on the occasion of a new moon sacrifice<sup>4</sup> (MS. 1, 4, 5: 52, 13; KS. 31, 15: 17, 10; TS. 1, 6, 7, 2; ĀpŚ. 4, 2, 3; 6; VārŚ. 1, 1, 2, 7). On entering upon the vow the sacrificer becomes so to say non-human (ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 6; VS. 2, 28 b) and being a limb (subdivision, *aṅga*) of the sacrifice (KŚ. 2, 1, 12) the vow marks the beginning proper of the sacred ceremony. – In a similar way “performing the rites of the animal sacrifice up to the laying down of a blade of the *barhis*” (BS. 25, 29: 262, 13) indicates the moment just before the killing of the victim.

The making of a *barhis* should be accompanied by *yajus* formulae (BŚ. 25, 10: 238, 14; 25, 11: 239, 4). The mantras which accompany the collecting of the sacrificial grass and its tying with a cord of grass (TS. 1, 1, 2, and less circumstantial and different in context and arrangement in KS. 1, 2; KapS. 1, 2; MS. 1, 1, 2) as well as the explanation in TB. 3, 2, 2 (cf. also KS. 31, 1; KapS. 47, 1; MS. 4, 1, 2; BŚ. 1, 2; BhŚ. 1, 3, 5; ĀpŚ. 1, 3; MŚ. 1, 1, 1) give a fairly adequate idea of the significance attached to the grass, its function and some of the purposes and expectations of those who use it. Referring for a complete survey of the relevant acts and the texts of the mantras to the above passages I make mention of the following particulars.

The grass is said to be the “wealth” of the sacrifice (comm.; cf. TB. etc. “(thus saying) he gives wealth to the patron of the sacrifice”) – or its “cattle provider”<sup>5</sup> –: the mantra seems to signify that the *gārhapatya* fire, which is addressed, is essential to the acquisition of property (especially cows) by means of the sacrifice. When the *adhvaryu* heats the sickle or the horse's rib used to cut off the grass<sup>6</sup>, or both implements (BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 4; 20, 1: 7, 4), on this fire or on the *āhavanīya*<sup>7</sup>, the mantra is

4. I refer to Hillebrandt, Neu- und Vollmondsopfer, p. 4 ff. Compare, e.g., also BhŚ. 4, 3, 2 ff.; MŚ. 1, 4, 1, 8 ff.; as to the new moon also ŚB. 6, 2, 2, 26 f.

5. The meaning of *gṛhaśad* (TS., BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 7; ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 3; KapS. 1, 2 (see the editor's note)) is uncertain, see P.E. Dumont, in JAOS 75, p. 117; PAPHs 101, p. 221; T. Burrow, in JAOS 76, p. 185; C.G. Kashikar, on BhŚ. 1, 3, 5; KS. and MS. read *gṛhaśad*, probably “cow-stable” (J.M. van Gelder translated “wealth” (MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 24)).

6. The compound *barhitāva* “cutter of *barhis* grass” occurs BŚ. 20, 3: 9, 16 and 10, 3; the compound *barhitāvāna* 24, 7: 190, 10.

7. See Caland, on ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 4.



“the *rakṣas* is burned up; the (envious) evil spirits (*arātayaḥ*, which could frustrate the officiant’s intentions) are burned up”. As to the horse’s rib see TB. 3, 1, 1; KS. 31, 1 etc.: the horse is of Prajāpati’s nature (or sacred to Prajāpati, *prājāpatya*: cf. ŚB. 6, 5, 3, 9) and Prajāpati – who knows the useful plants joint by joint, MS., KS., KapS. – does not injure the plants; so the tool used has identity of origin with Prajāpati and will not injure the grass. The next mantra “this *dhiṣaṇā*<sup>8</sup> (probably some form, manifestation, or materialization of (higher, inspired) knowledge (*vidyā*, TB. and the other *brāhmaṇa* passages)), (first) made by Manu, fashioned because of (his) inherent power (spontaneously, *svadhayā*<sup>9</sup>) has come to the grass (*barhis*)” refers to the tool used, signifying that it is a product of wisdom that reaches back to the progenitor of mankind. Work being regarded as a form of creation, the craftsmen or labourers of antiquity believed to wield a power superior to themselves which was often supposed to reside within their implements. These were therefore made after the same model, because deviations would injure their potency. For this reason tools used for religious purposes often retained an archaic form for a long time, even when more modern tools made of other material had come into existence.

In Kauś. 1, 24; 8, 11; 61, 38 AVŚ. 12, 3, 31 a “hold out the sickle, hasten, bring (the grass) eagerly” are addressed to the man who has to fetch the *darbha* when a crooked knife is given to him.

When the *adhvaryu* goes to fetch the grass, he pronounces the mantra “the sages (*kavayaḥ*, i.e. brahmins, *ṛṣiḥ*, MS. 4, 1, 2: 2, 18) fetch (*āvahanti*; *āharanti* KS. and KapS. which place this mantra at the end of their exposition) it from in front (i.e. from the east, where is the sacrifice, TB.), a *barhis*, delightful for the gods here to sit upon”<sup>10</sup>. Thus he says “for the complete success of the *barhis*, in order to secure the rite (*karman*) against defects” (TB.), whilst looking at the *vedi*<sup>11</sup> (BŚ.). He goes to fetch the grass towards the east or the north (MŚ. 1, 1, 2, 28), the auspicious regions of the universe<sup>12</sup>. He grasps only so much of the *kuśa* grass as he thinks to be sufficient for the *prastara*<sup>13</sup> (BŚ.). When he grasps it, he says, in order not to injure himself – i.e. in order to safeguard himself against guilt – “thou art produced (granted, with the implication “grasped”) by the gods (TB., MS.; by Indra KS., KapS.), “just as anything else in the world” (*brāhmaṇas*); “he so to say announces the work he does to his superior” (*brāhmaṇas*), that means: he acts by order of the gods (of Indra). In order to avoid excess (overdoing) in the sacrifice<sup>14</sup>, which would

8. On *dhiṣaṇā*, see Mayrhofer, Etymol. Wörterbuch, II, p. 103 (with references); L. Renou, Études sur le vocabulaire du Rgveda, Pondichéry 1958, p. 52 ff.; Renou, E.V.P. IV, p. 54; Dumont, PAPHS, I.c.; J. Gonda, The vision of the Vedic poets, The Hague 1963, p. 116; also ŚB. 6, 5, 4, 3 (with Eggeling’s note).

9. Rather than “with the *svadhā* call” (Keith, van Gelder, Dumont).

10. Compare VS. 2, 18; ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 25; VS. 26, 23; 24 and see also RV. 1, 135, 1; 3, 41, 3; 6, 68, 11; 10, 70, 11; TB. 2, 4, 6, 2; 2, 6, 7, 2; 2, 8, 2, 1 etc.

11. And thus transferring the powerful purport of the mantra (see J. Gonda, Eye and gaze in the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1969, p. 10 ff., etc.).

12. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 53 f.

13. See below.

14. I refer to J. Gonda, The redundant and the deficient in Vedic ritual, Vishveshvaranand Indol. Journal, 21, p. 1 ff.

strengthen the (sacrificer's) rival, he should point out only one tuft and cut off that completely. (But, KS. and KapS. add,) he should leave a little, lest he should deprive the domestic animals of their livelihood. Cf. also ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 8 ff.; BhŚ. 1, 3, 10)<sup>15</sup>. The Taittirīyas insert a reference to the divine origin of the tuft, viz. the mantra "thou art made to grow by the rains", pronounced when the officiant strokes the tuft towards its upper part. He touches (MŚ.) the bunch of grass, or he leaves out the first bunch (BhŚ.) or one bunch (ĀpŚ.) with "thou art the hair-knot (*stupa*) of Viṣṇu". This hair-knot<sup>16</sup> had been cut off and had entered the earth (MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 7); since Viṣṇu is the sacrifice, the formula is pronounced in order to make the sacrifice firm (cf. TB. 3, 3, 6, 5 f.). The hair-knot is ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 5 identified with the *prastara* bunch, the first handful of *darbha* blades (ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 15 f.; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 32; see also BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 18). This bunch should be left loose (laid aside, BhŚ. 1, 3, 8; ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 7); if the officiant should not do that, he would suffer hardship (MS. 1, 1, 2; 1, 9 and 4, 1, 2: 3, 7)<sup>17</sup>. Significantly, MS. now uses the well-known formula stating that the rite is performed at the impulse of Savitar, the divine impeller, with the arms of the Aśvins, the *adhvaryus* of the gods etc., which TB. places at the very beginning of its exposition. MŚ. prescribes it twice (23 and 34).

Whilst grasping the grass the *adhvaryu* says: "O deity *barhis* (or, when read as one word, *barhis*<sup>18</sup> of the gods) ..."; so as to make it fit for the gods (TB.), "... let me not hit thee either along or across ..."; in order to avoid injury (TB.), while cutting the bunch at a joint (BhŚ.), KS., KapS., MS. and MŚ. reading: "May I not succeed (reach in cutting thee, *ṛdhyāsam*)<sup>19</sup> under or above thy joint"; "... let me attain (hit, *rādhyāsam*) thy joint". "Thus he says for success" (*ṛddhyai*, TB. etc., "for sparing the plants", MS.). The mantra "in cutting thee, let me come to no harm", which accompanies the cutting of the grass, is to prevent the officiant from harming himself. The one who knows this will not suffer any detriment of his own self or body: TS. h; TB. 5; KS. 1, 2; 31, 1, Kap. and MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 10, stating that as much as an ignorant *adhvaryu* cuts off from the grass, so much detriment of his own self he will suffer; BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 15 ("(with these words) he touches the cuttings"); ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 14; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 37. See also ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 5; TB. 3, 7, 4, 10.

Another invocation of the divine *barhis* and a request to rise with a hundred shoots<sup>20</sup> follow, when the *adhvaryu* touches the stubble of the grass he has cut off (BŚ., BhŚ. 1, 4, 1; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 8; he says thus "for procreation of offspring, because the *barhis* is offspring"<sup>21</sup> (*prajā*, TB., that means: it represents the offspring of the patron

15. It is perhaps worth noticing that in connexion with the *barhis* both Bh. and Āp. use the word *darbhama*, in connexion with Viṣṇu's *stupa stamba*, in connexion with the cows *nādīh* (but VaikhŚ. 3, 4: 34, 16 *darbhanādīh*).

16. Cf. also TS. 1, 1, 11 g and ch. XI, p. 199 etc.

17. As to MS. 1, 1, 2: 1, 8; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 31; BhŚ. 1, 3, 10; ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 9 see Caland's note on ĀpŚ. l.c.

18. Caland, ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 12; for *déva barhis* see RV. 2, 3, 4.

19. This translation may dispose of Keith's note on TS. 1, 1, 2 f.

20. Cf. RV. 10, 97, 2 (VS. 12, 76; ŚB. 7, 2, 4, 27) on the hundred varieties of plants.

21. For this frequent "identification" see also TS. 2, 6, 1, 2; 2, 6, 5, 3; 6, 6, 3, 3; MS. 3, 8, 6: 102, 2; 4, 1, 13: 17, 8; TB. 1, 6, 3, 10; 1, 6, 9, 2; 10; 3, 2, 10, 3; 3, 3, 6, 2; 3; 8; 3, 3, 8, 7; ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 16; 2, 6, 1, 23; 44: 4, 4, 5, 14; KB. 5, 7 (5, 8, 27). etc.; cf. also TS. 2, 6, 1, 2, etc.

of the sacrifice), or “for imparting abundance to the useful plants” (MS., KS., KapS.): cf. ŚB. 1, 5, 4, 4 “he pronounces the oblatory mantra to the *barhis*; the *barhis* represents abundance; hence he thereby produces an abundance”). In view of the widespread belief in the existence of intimate relations between plants and human fertility<sup>22</sup>, the idea of the “identity” of a man’s offspring and the quickly growing grass – as well as plants in general (ŚB. 7, 2, 4, 27: they are shooting out a hundred-fold and a thousandfold) – is not absurd: cases are not absent in which a tuft or a single blade of grass, believed to be a bearer of power, was used to make a childless woman pregnant<sup>23</sup>. Grasses, the most universally distributed flowering plants, are moreover of great importance to man. Has their upright and conspicuously jointed stems, which in the case of *darbha* are about two feet in height, and the exterior of which is usually smooth like the skin of a human being, contributed to this identification?<sup>24</sup>

In this light we must view the use of the mantra TS. 1, 1, 2 i; MS. 1, 1, 2: 2, 1 “O *barhis*, rise with a hundred shoots ...”, which as RV. 3, 8, 11 (VS. 5, 43; TS. 1, 3, 5, 1; MS. 1, 2, 14: 23, 9; KS. 3, 2) is recited by the *adhvaryu* when he performs the ritual cutting of the sacrificial post. With these words he then sacrifices on the stump of the tree (TS. 6, 3, 3, 3); “therefore many (shoots) spring up from the stump of trees” (ibid.). The second part of the mantra “may we rise with a hundred shoots” is a prayer for offspring (TB. 3, 2, 2, 6; MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 14; cf. KS. 31, 1: 2, 2; 26, 3: 125, 13). Whilst pronouncing it the *adhvaryu* touches himself (BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 17; BhŚ. 1, 4, 2; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 9; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 39). The parallelism between the origin of plant life and that of human life, which is taken for granted, has led to the use of this prayer in the *barhis* ritual.

The following mantra (TS. k; BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 18; BhŚ. 1, 4, 3; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 1; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 35) “protect (it) from the contact of the earth” accompanies the depositing of the first handful of grass, which the officiant has cut off and constitutes the *prastara*<sup>25</sup>, on some grass that he has put on the ground. For a similar use of the mantra see TS. 1, 3, 8, 2; ĀpŚ. 7, 16, 4. From TS. 6, 3, 8, 2 f. it appears that something fallen on the strew is not lost, obviously in contrast to that which falls on the earth. In ŚB. 14, 1, 3, 14 the same words are as VS. 37, 11 pronounced when a plate of silver is placed on the earth in order to prevent the (terrestrial) demons (*rakṣas*) from injuring the *pravargya*, but the author adds that this plate is also to prevent the glowing *pravargya* from injuring the earth. Now ritual actions performed with a view to avoiding contact with the earth<sup>26</sup> are as well known as the fear of spilling or destroying a sacred substance that might fall on the ground (e.g. ŚB. 3, 8, 1, 14)<sup>27</sup>.

22. See, e.g., M. Eliade, *Traité d'histoire des religions*, Paris 1949; <sup>3</sup>1975 (*Patterns in comparative religion*, New York 1958), § 115 (with references).

23. See, e.g., J. Winthuis, *Einführung in die Vorstellungswelt primitiver Völker*, 1931, p. 249 ff.

24. Notice that in various regions of Europe the cornspirit is conceived as a baby (for some particulars see J.G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, abridged edition, London 1957, p. 534 ff.; 603).

25. See ch. XI.

26. Compare, e.g., Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 82 ff.; 293.

27. See also p. 163; 177 etc.

Now TB. 6; BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 3; BhŚ. 1, 3, 19; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 3 ff. enjoin the *adhvaryu* each time to cut off ("without a mantra" (BŚ.)) an odd number of handfuls of grass, "for copulation, for procreation" (TB.). An odd number, especially three, is regarded as a manifestation of the idea of generation (see, e.g., ŚB. 6, 5, 3, 5)<sup>28</sup>. As to the "silent (*lūṣṇīm*) performance", the ritual act is repeated, and in that case no mantras are used<sup>29</sup>. The blades of grass cut off must be stainless (MŚ. 36): impurity means evil, dwindling of power and so on<sup>30</sup>.

The next formula calls attention to the fact that the gathering is performed in the right way: "I gather thee "with good gathering" (i.e. correctly)" (TS. 1). According to TB. 3, 2, 2, 6 it refers to the power of the *brāhman*, i.e. of the confirmative effect of the sacred word, by means of which the action is performed (*brahmanavainat sambharati*) and consecrated<sup>31</sup>. In BhŚ. 1, 4, 3 this formula follows the preceding one immediately; BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 4 uses it in connexion with the *prastara* (cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 12), ĀpŚ., l.c., and MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 42 incorrectly from the grammatical point of view, in connexion with the handfuls of grass (*nidhanāni*, plural, cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 3) that are being gathered.

Though differing in particulars the *sūtra* works prescribe the mantra "thou art the girdle (*rāsṇā*) of Aditi" (TS. 1, 1, 2 m) in connexion with the cord which the officiant uses for tying the grass (TB. 3, 2, 2, 7). Because Aditi is the earth (cf. ŚB. 5, 3, 1, 4; 7, 4, 2, 7), he makes the cord to be the girdle of the earth (TB.; MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 14; KS. 31, 1: 2, 2). In a discussion of the girdling of the sacrificer's wife the same formula (VS. 1, 30) is followed by the same 'identification' with the addition that Aditi is the wife of the gods (ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 15) and the observation that a *rāsṇā* is not a string, rope, or noose (*rajju*), another word for Varuṇa's *pāśa*, by means of which he binds the sinners (RV. 1, 24, 15; 1, 25, 21 etc.; ŚB. 3, 7, 4, 1; 6, 4, 3, 8; cf. also 1, 3, 1, 14). At ŚB. 3, 2, 4, 18 it reads in connexion with the cow for which the soma is purchased: "Were she tied with a *rajju*, she would be under the power of Varuṇa". Hence the explanation of the formula under discussion (VS. 11, 59) in ŚB. 6, 5, 2, 13: "Since the *rajju* relates to Varuṇa, he makes this belt (by calling it Aditi's *rāsṇā*) not relating to Varuṇa". (This passage deals with the fashioning of the fire-pan (*ukhā*); cf. TS. 4, 1, 5, 4; ĀpŚ. 16, 5, 1). See also ĀpŚ. 15, 9, 3. The companion formula "(thou art) Indrāṇī's band (*saṃnahanam*)" is according to TB., l.c., a reference to the tying of Indra's spouse in front of the deities, with the result that she prospered. "She let herself be bound because she wished to prosper" (MS.). "It is for prosperity (cf. MS.) that he ties (the grass with the cord); the grass is offspring (also MS.). It is in order that offspring may not be scattered away. And that is (also) why creatures, when they are born, have the limbs of their body hold together with tendons" (TB.; cf. KS., KapS., MS.); a usual type

28. J. Gonda, *Triads in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1976, p. 14; otherwise Dumont, PAPHS 101, p. 222; see also Caland, on ĀpŚ., l.c.

29. Cf. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 79; see e.g. BhŚ. 1, 2, 5; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 7.

30. Cf. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 280.

31. For praise and eulogistic formulae or texts as confirmation of divine power see G. van der Leeuw, *Religion in essence and manifestation*, London 1938, p. 430 ff.; for the basic meaning of *brāhman* J. Gonda, *Notes on brahman*, Utrecht 1950, esp. p. 39 ff.

of explanation of a natural fact or process as caused or determined by a rite that, established in the beginning by a god (or the gods), is traditionally performed by the Aryan sacrificers and officiants. See also BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 5; BhŚ. 1, 4, 11; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 12. In MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 44 the officiant draws the ends of the cord together with this formula, an act which reminds us of MG. 1, 11, 5, where, in a description of the marriage rites, the ends of the bride's garment<sup>32</sup> are drawn together with a rope of *darbha* and the same formula. The same verb (*samāyamyā*) is again used in MŚ. 2, 2, 1, 8 to indicate the tightening of the girdle of the sacrificer who is being consecrated (also BhŚ. 12, 2, 3; ĀpŚ. 11, 2, 1; cf. BŚ. 6, 19: 178, 15, likewise describing the intermediate consecration). In this connexion TS. 6, 2, 2, 7 is worth quoting: "He (the sacrificer) protects himself by the consecration, his offspring by the intermediate consecration. He makes the girdle tighter, for (his) offspring are nearer to him (than other beings)"<sup>33</sup>. As to the relation between the girdle and offspring see MG. 1, 11, 6; Kauś. 76, 7, where the bride is girt with a yoke-rope with "I gird you ... with offspring and wealth" (cf. AVŚ. 14, 2, 70; TS. 3, 5, 6, 1). That is to say that the girdle is supposed to transfer the things mentioned in the mantra to the person girded.

Both mantras are prescribed for the one who assists in procuring the *sāmnāyā* milk when he has to seize the halter of the cow (ĀpŚ. 1, 12, 7). ŚB. 14, 2, 1, 8 (VS. 38, 3) mentions Indrāṇī's head-band (*uṣṇīṣa*), when a rope is laid round the cow that is to be milked by those who perform the *pravargya* ritual.

There is another mantra that deserves attention. When the cord is prepared the *adhvaryu* utters the words "the womb (birth-place) is unobstructed (not disturbed)" (*ayupitā yoniḥ* MS. 1, 1, 2: 2, 2; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 40; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 11 *-to y.* BhŚ. 1, 4, 5). At a later moment – after the use of the mantras TS. m and l – he collects the *prastara* with the same mantra (MŚ. 43) or the variant "the birth-place is not disordered" (*alubhito yoniḥ* BhŚ. 10; ĀpŚ. 12). These mantras seem to point to the conclusion that the bundle of grass that is kept together by the cord is regarded as the place in which the offspring is developed until the time of birth. It may be recalled that in making the fire-pan (*ukhā*, *agnicayana*) one lays a horizontal belt or "cord" (*rāsnā*) round this object in order to encircle and strengthen it (ŚB. 6, 5, 2, 11).

The following act is also meant to have a bearing upon the production of offspring. The *adhvaryu* makes a knot (BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 5; BhŚ. 1, 4, 12; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 13; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 44) and hides it from west to east (also BŚ., but cf. BhŚ. 13 f.; ĀpŚ. 14), and by that he places the seminal fluid of his patron so that it is in the normal way directed forwards from behind (TB. 3, 2, 2, 8; cf. 3, 3, 6, 5). When he makes the knot he pronounces the mantra "let Pūṣan tie the knot for thee" (TS. 1, 1, 2 n; MS. 1, 1, 2: 2, 2; 4, 1, 2: 3, 18; KS. 1, 2: 31, 1; KapS. 47, 1: 285, 3). TB. observes in explanation that (thus saying) the *adhvaryu* gives prosperity (*puṣṭi*) to the patron;

32. See, however, M.J. Dresden, *Mānavagṛhyasūtra*, Thesis Utrecht 1941, p. 53.

33. Otherwise, Keith: "... are closer to him than himself"; Caland, on ĀpŚ. 11, 1, 13 "der Nachkomme (das Junge) befindet sich ja (beim Weibe) mehr im Inneren". For *antara* and the ablative see ŚB. 3, 2, 1, 11; 5, 2, 1, 8; KŚ. 7, 3, 26; 14, 5, 4 (notice Ranade's translations!). As to *antaratarā* denoting a difference see J. Gonda, *Old Indian*, Leiden 1971, p. 78. For the verb *samāyami-* compare also RV. 10, 94, 6; ŚB. 3, 3, 2, 19.



likewise KS. 31, 1: 2, 6 and KapS. reminding us of the 'identity' of Pūṣan and *puṣṭi*<sup>34</sup>. As to the healing, protective and apotropaeic function of a knot see TB. 3, 3, 3, 4 (a knot means blessing); Kauś. 19, 12; 26, 9 and 10<sup>35</sup>. Accordingly, the formula that consecrates the hiding of the knot seems to mean "that (knot) of yours has remained by (resorted to) me" (*sa te māsthāt*)<sup>36</sup>. TB., KS., KapS., MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 19 state that the officiant says this in order to avoid injury.

According to MS. 4, 1, 2: 3, 20; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 46; BhŚ. 1, 4, 15; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 15 the officiant now takes hold of the *barhis* calling it the banner of Uṣas (the red light of the morning-sky, ṚV. 7, 67, 2; 7, 76, 2; 10, 89, 12) and stating that the Waters, the Aśvins and the seven *ṛṣis* have cleansed it, and that he now touches it simultaneously with (cf. ṚV. 1, 47, 7; 1, 92, 12; 5, 79, 8) the rays of the sun. In MS. the only comment is that the healers of the gods act as physicians to it. With the formula "with the arms of Indra I hold thee up" (TS. o) recited when he holds up the grass the *adhvaryu* puts energy (faculty of the senses, *indriyam*) into the patron (TB.). *Indriya* is Indra's characteristic power (cf. ŚB. 5, 4, 5, 10; 6, 1, 1, 2). The companion mantra "I carry thee with the head of Bṛhaspati" expresses the opinion that the *adhvaryu*, while bearing the grass on his head (BŚ.) or placing it there (BhŚ., ĀpŚ., MŚ.), carries it with the *brāhman* of the gods (see above) represented by (the name of) Bṛhaspati<sup>37</sup> (TB.; MS. 1, 2: 4, 2; KS., KapS.).

The words "fare along the wide intermediate space" (TS. p) are pronounced "for going", that is, for making the grass go successfully (TB. 9); when he has (gone and) returned himself (cf. BŚ., ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 1 and 1, 3, 5; MŚ. 25; 49) to bring it to the fire-place (BhŚ. 1, 4, 18). The same mantra occurs as TS. 1, 1, 4 r in connexion with the rice for an oblation (*havis*; cf. TB. 3, 2, 4, 7; ĀpŚ. 1, 17, 4; 1, 18, 4; also KŚ. 2, 3, 10 and ŚB. 1, 1, 2, 4); as 1, 2, 8 b in connexion with the *soma*-cart; as 1, 3, 9 o; ĀpŚ. 7, 19, 4 (cf. also TS. 6, 3, 9, 4) it accompanies the carrying of the omentum; as 1, 4, 2 d the going of the *adhvaryu* to the *āhavanīya*, and so on. The implication no doubt is "go, be, exist in a safe place". The wide intermediate space, "a place of abode for all the gods" (ŚB. 14, 3, 2, 6), is the realm of the bright light, which is lovely, splendid, salutary (ṚV. 10, 124, 6 *idāṃ śār idāṃ id āsa vāmām ayām prakāśā urò antārikṣam*). By pronouncing the mantra (here called *brāhman*) "I move along the wide<sup>38</sup> intermediate space" one renders that space free from danger and evil spirits (ŚB. 1, 1, 2, 4). The variant mantra (... *vīhi* instead of *anvīhi*), which

34. On this see J. Gonda, Pūṣan and Saravastī, Amsterdam Acad. 1985, p. 70, 72 etc.; on this passage in particular, § 94.

35. See, e.g., P. Wolters, Faden und Knoten als Amulett, Archiv für Religionswissenschaft 8 (Freiburg i. Br. 1905), Beiheft 1. Cf. also ŚB. 3, 5, 3, 25; 3, 6, 1, 25; GG. 4, 9, 8; KhG. 4, 3, 14; Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 159 f.

36. In most text editions incorrectly *mā sthāt* (*mā "sthāt*). Caland's translation (ĀpŚ.) is "nicht treffe dieser dich"; van Gelder's (MS.) "may that (knot) not hit thee"; Dumont's (TB.) "may this not hurt thee"; Keith's (TS.) "that knot shall mount me"; Kashikar's (BhŚ.) "that (knot) of yours has mounted upon me".

37. Gonda, Notes on brahman, p. 66 ff.

38. For the implications of "wide" or "broad" (*uru*) see J. Gonda, Loka, Amsterdam Academy 1966, p. 20 ff. etc.; for ṚV. 10, 124, 6 see p. 79 f.

occurs also in MS. 1, 1, 2: 2, 4 etc.; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 25; 49<sup>39</sup>, in VS. 11, 15 (ŚB. 6, 3, 2, 8; also TS. 4, 1, 2, 2) followed by the words "... with prosperous pastures, affording safety"<sup>40</sup>.

The following formula "thou art going to the gods" (TS. q) should according to TB. 9 be taken literally: "to the gods indeed he causes it to go". In KS. 31, 1: 2, 8 the explanation runs as follows: "Much of what has been gathered on the day before is spilt; he presents it to the gods as unspilt"; likewise MS. 4, 1, 2: 4, 5 adding: "in order to spare the patron". This seems to be in harmony with BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 8 "he places it not directly on the ground (*anadhas*) on the left side (north of) the *gārhapatya* (fireplace); he puts it down on that where he thinks it well protected", that is not on the ground (ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 4), but on a mat or something like that<sup>41</sup>. According to BhŚ. 1, 4, 19 f. it is put down with "I place thee in the lap of Aditi" (TS. 1, 1, 4 s, used when the winnowing basket with the rice is deposited, TB. 3, 2, 4, 7; here MS. prescribes "... on the back of Aditi (the earth)" which is elsewhere used in the *agnicayana* (ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 10)), not directly on the ground within (the place intended for) the *vedi* (*antarvedi*) to the rear of the *āhavanīya* fire (similarly ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 2) and the formula TS. q is recited over the *barhis*, when it has been placed there. TB. 3, 2, 2, 9 mentions two reasons for placing the grass not low (*anadhas*) but "above as it were", viz. "for the holding fast of the embryos, for preventing abortiveness (*aprapādāya*, the verb *prapad-* literally means "to fall down"), and "in order to obtain the heavenly world (for the patron)", because "the heavenly world is above as it were"<sup>42</sup>.

Blades of grass were, quite intelligibly, used for binding, tying etc. Thus in describing the purchase of the *soma* cow ĀpŚ. 10, 22, 1 and MŚ. 2, 1, 3, 32 enjoin the officiant to tie a piece of gold with a *darbha* blade and to put this in the ghee to the accompaniment of the formula "this (ghee) is thy body ..., this (gold) thy brilliant vital power" (*varcas*; MS. 1, 2, 4: 13, 1)<sup>43</sup>. A similar rite accompanied by a similar mantra (VS. 4, 17) is described in KŚ. 7, 6, 8 (see ŚB. 3, 2, 4, 9), where however the blade of grass is called *barhistṛṇena*: this means, the commentator observes, that one should take a blade of grass from that which has been strewn on the *vedi*; "in the contrary case (the author) would have said only "with a blade of grass" (*tṛṇena*)".

The knot that fastens the rope with which the grass is bound together is in BhŚ. 2, 8, 4 and ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 3 loosened with "Pūṣan must untie thy knot", which has been borrowed from MS. 1, 1, 12: 7, 9 (see also MŚ. 1, 2, 5, 28) and constitutes the counterpart of BhŚ. 1, 4, 12; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 13; MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 44<sup>44</sup>.

39. KS. 1, 2 and 31, 1: 1, 6 have it used "for the attainment (of the patron's aims)" when, in the beginning of the rite, the *adhvaryu* goes to fetch the grass.

40. See Gonda, Pūṣan and Sarasvatī, § 96.

41. See Caland, on ĀpŚ. 1, 5, 4.

42. Here BŚ. inserts: "he cuts off edible (plants) without a mantra" and "that which has been severed with one cut he cuts off for the Fathers". This with a view to the oblation of the obsequial cakes to the deceased ancestors (see, e.g., ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 17; ĀpŚ. 1, 7, 3 f.; 13; 1, 10, 13). See also ch. III.

43. See also TS. 1, 2, 4, 1; 6, 1, 7, 1.

44. For Pūṣan and loosening see Gonda, Pūṣan and Sarasvatī, § 67.

From the sections on the spreading of the sacrificial grass on the *vedi* in BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 3 and ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 1 f. (cf. BhŚ. 2, 8, 12) it appears that the bands or cords with which the *barhis* has been bound together (*barhiḥsaṃnahanāni*) are arranged on the south side within the *vedi* towards the east or the north, or from the south-western to the north-eastern corner. For the probable source of this direction see K.S. 31, 10: 12, 16, where the *nīvi*, i.e. the band for tying together the folded grass, is also said to be on the south side. To this side one puts aside waste matter<sup>45</sup>.

In connexion with the sacrificial use of the *barhis* and in particular with its being spread on the *vedi* it must be observed that in the section dealing with the preparation of the *vedi* for the sacrifices of the full and new moon in ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 1 ff. (cf. KŚ. 2, 7, 19; VS. 2, 1) the *adhvaryu*, after having sprinkled it, was to make it sacrificially pure for the *barhis*<sup>46</sup>, receives the latter from the *āgnīdhra*, puts it down on the *vedi* with the knot turned to the east (i.e. godward, ŚB. 7, 3, 2, 1; see also RV. 1, 188, 4; 9, 5, 4; 10, 110, 4; AVŚ. 5, 12, 4)<sup>47</sup> and makes it in the same way pure for the spoons. While doing so he pronounces what the Romans called *certa verba*, words of consecration by means of which the character of the *barhis* and its consecrated condition are stated positively: "Thou art (the) *barhis*. I sprinkle thee, propitious (*juṣtam*) to the spoons" (cf. VS. 2, 1). He pours the remainder of the water on the roots of the *barhis* plants to be a moistening for Aditi, who is the earth. "Thereby the plants become root-moistened" (ŚB. 4). He then undoes the band of the *barhis* (KŚ. 21 f.) in order to enable the sacrificer's wife to bring forth easily<sup>48</sup>: when a woman is in travail all knots in the house should be untied (Kauś. 33, 5)<sup>49</sup>.

There are other reasons for which the *adhvaryu* spreads the *barhis*, viz. to avoid the nudity of the *vedi* which, being denoted by a feminine word, is a woman; and to furnish the earth, which is "as large as the *vedi*", with firmly established plants (ŚB. 8 f.). He should strew abundantly (KŚ. 24) in order to make the earth afford, for the special benefit of the patron, most ample means of subsistence: another indication of the supposed causal relation between the *barhis* and plant life. He strews the *barhis* threefold, viz. in three layers, one beside the other (KŚ. 22 ff.): as is well known, three is also in Vedic theory and practice the number of completion, perfection, and totality par excellence<sup>50</sup>. He sees to it that the roots of the plants are laid under their tops, "for plants are firmly established in the earth with their roots below" (ŚB. 10; KŚ. 25). On the strength of VS. 7, 32 (RV. 8, 45, 1) the *barhis* is spread in continuous order (*ānuṣak*: *anupūrvasyānuṣaktam*, comm.; ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 10); the recitation of VS. 2, 2 "I spread thee ..., good for the gods to sit upon" is to make it agreeable to the gods (ŚB. 11)<sup>51</sup>. As to continuity, this is in performing ritual acts

45. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 55 f.

46. See also TB. 2, 6, 5, 1.

47. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 52 f.

48. See also VaikhG. 1, 10.

49. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 159; cf. 327.

50. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 29 ff. and Index, p. 501.

51. For the belief that visiting gods – *in casu*, "deities that are represented by poles and flags" – sit down on stone seats placed for their convenience in a sacred enclosure see, e.g., V. Elwin, The Muria and their ghotul, Bombay 1947, p. 196 f.

believed to be of special importance and brought about or conjured up by various means<sup>52</sup>; interruptions which may endanger the chance of success or even the sacrificer's life should be avoided.

With regard to the orientation of the *barhis* attention may be drawn to ŚB. 3, 5, 4, 20: it is spread with its tops to the east (the most auspicious region of the gods), and to the north (the auspicious region of men) (*prācīnāgrāṇi codīcīnāgrāṇi*: notice the repeated *ca*, underlining complementary connexion). Likewise 3, 7, 1, 7.

“Well-spread”, “forming an excellent bed or seat” (*suṣṭarīman*) and “soft as wool” (*ūrṇamradas*) are characteristic epithets of the *barhis*: VS. 29, 4; TS. 5, 1, 11, 2; MS. 3, 16, 2: 184, 4 etc.; TB. 2, 4, 8, 5 *edaṃ barhiḥ sustarīmā navena* (sc. *haviṣā yuktaḥ*, comm.); “well-spread and soft as wool” (TB. 3, 6, 2, 1; 3, 7, 6, 5 h), cf. also VS. 2, 2; 5; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 2 etc.

While the information given by the texts of the Black Yajurveda tallies in several respects with the above facts<sup>53</sup>, these works contain some more statements that deserve attention. In TB. 3, 2, 9, 14 it is observed that the *adhvaryu* who orders the *āgnīdhra* to put down the sprinkling water, the fuel and the *barhis*, and so on does so in order to maintain the regular order (of the *āgnīdhra*'s actions), a point of special interest and importance: see, e.g., ṚV. 10, 131, 2 (VS. 10, 32; ŚB. 5, 5, 4, 24): corn that has been cut is spread asunder in regular order; ŚB. 6, 3, 1, 28; 11, 5, 5, 11; 13, 2, 1, 5 “in the regular (proper) order he thus gratifies the gods”; 3, 3, 1, 1; BŚ. 25, 17: 248, 9<sup>54</sup>. It should be strewn plentifully so that the ground may not become visible (BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 7; BhŚ. 2, 8, 13; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 2). According to TB. 3, 2, 10, 2 the *āgnīdhra*, executing this order, puts down fuel and *barhis* “with a view to (their) forming a combination” (*yuktyai*). Fuel and sacrificial grass belong to those sacrificial requisites that often – and probably already in the prehistoric period<sup>55</sup> – occur in pairs (cf., e.g., ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 21; 2, 6, 1, 12). The words even form a *dvandva* compound<sup>56</sup>. (See, e.g., TB. 1, 6, 6, 5; 3, 2, 3, 1; ŚBK. 1, 6, 1, 9; 2, 2, 3, 19). The expression *mithunavāya*, sometimes followed by *prajananāya* or *prajātyai*, means “with a view to forming a pair”, in the literal (sexual) sense e.g. JB. 2, 405 (of a man and a prostitute); PB. 18, 9, 20 (of animals), but not infrequently also in a non-literal sense: TB. 3, 3, 1, 1 with regard to “male” and “female” utensils (the words denoting them being masculine and feminine); 3, 3, 9, 11; 3, 3, 4, 6; 2, 1, 2, 12 the man who performs the *agnihotra* offers a second libation without any mantra, “in order to produce a pair (together with the first libation), for the procreation of offspring” (that means that the pair of libations brought about in this way is expected to be conducive to the production of offspring). Sometimes, however, no mention is made of two beings, actions or objects: TB. 3, 3, 4, 2 “the (pa-

52. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 50 f.

53. Cf. TB. 3, 2, 9 f. As to ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 3 compare BŚ. 1, 13: 19, 15; BhŚ. 2, 7, 14; ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 1; MŚ. 1, 2, 5, 23; to ŚB. 10, BhŚ. 2, 8, 14; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 3; to ŚB. 11, BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 5; BhŚ. 2, 8, 12 f.; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 2 etc.

54. See also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 208 f. etc.

55. I refer to E. Benveniste, in Bull. School Or. Stud. 8, p. 405; Mayrhofer, Wörterbuch, II, p. 416.

56. On the remarkable form of the compound *idhmābarhis* see J. Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik, II, 1, Göttingen 1905, p. 160 (§ 68 a).

tron's) wife looks down upon the butter for copulation (*mithunatvāya*), for procreation; (for) whatever part of the sacrifice she performs, that is copulation". ŚB. 13, 1, 6, 1 the horse that is to be the victim (*aśvamedha*) is addressed: "'thou art a male' with a view to its (or, his) being supplied with a mate" (Eggeling's translation of *mithunatvāya*; cf. also TB. 3, 8, 22, 3). In TB. 3, 2, 10, 2 the addition *yajñasya* to *mithunatvāya* (after *yuktyai*, see above) is uncommon and Dumont's guess "for their pairing with the sacrifice" hardly right. The author probably expresses the wish that through the help or because of the mere presence of fuel and grass the sacrifice will be productive.

The way in which the *barhis* is spread or dealt with is not irrelevant. The *adhvaryu* should spread it "not transparent" (*anatiḍṛśnam*), that is not thin, in such a way that the ground underneath cannot be seen (BhŚ. 2, 8, 13; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 2). By doing thus he makes the sacrificer not thin in offspring and cattle (TS. 2, 6, 5, 2<sup>57</sup>; TB. 3, 3, 6, 8). Ritual actions, faults or omissions have their repercussions to the advantage or detriment of the patron of the sacrifice. By pronouncing the formula TS. 1, 1, 11 c (VS. 2, 1 c) whilst sprinkling the *barhis* the *adhvaryu* establishes the patron firmly on his offspring, because the *barhis* represents the latter and the spoons (mentioned in the mantra) the former (TB. 3, 3, 6, 3)<sup>58</sup>. Since, however, the patron is also represented by the sacrificial cake (*puroḍaś*) this officiant also establishes the patron's authority over his children (subjects) by putting this cake on the *barhis* (3, 3, 8, 7). But the result of the contact into which the (hard) cake is brought with the (soft) grass is also that some of the children (subjects) stand firm on account of their (hard) bones, some on account of their (soft) flesh<sup>59</sup>. The grass should be spread in one row (put down eastward or westward) with the tips in the next row (BhŚ. 2, 8, 14; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 3; also KŚ. 2, 7, 25).

Just like the fuel the *barhis* is triply bound or tied together in threefold sheaves: MS. 1, 10, 7: 147, 10 *tredhāsamṇaddham barhir bhavati* (also KS. 36, 2: 69, 14; TB. 1, 6, 3, 1)<sup>60</sup>. According to the ritualists it is strewn threefold, in three rows (*tridhātu* BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 7 (*trivṛtam*); cf. ṚV. 1, 181, 8; 8, 102, 14) or fivefold, in five rows (*pañcadhātu*). Three is the number of completion and perfection<sup>61</sup>, but TB. 1, 6, 3, 1 co-ordinates this triad (its being *tredhā*) with the three provinces of the universe and the establishment of a firm foundation in them and its consisting of three parts or being triform (*trivṛt*) with the triad of mother, father and child: "this is the characteristic manifestation of generation" (ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 18; see also KŚ. 5, 1, 25; cf. BŚ. 5, 1: 128, 6). The number five represents the totality of the fourfold division of the universe on which various divine and ritual powers and entities are grouped and articulated<sup>62</sup>.

For two reasons the *āgnīdhra* should not put down fuel and grass with their points

57. Keith's translation, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 210 is incorrect. See Sāyaṇa on TB: *bhūmisvarūpam atyanam yathā na drśyate tathā bahulam strīṇyāt* and Dumont, in Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 103, p. 594, n. 39.

58. As to the 'symbolism' of the spoons compare, e.g., ŚB. 11, 4, 2, 1 f.

59. GB. 2, 5, 9: 236, 4 is corrupt.

60. See also Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 12, n. 4.

61. J. Gonda, Triads in the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1976.

62. J. Gonda, Viṣṇuism and Śivaism, London 1970, p. 45; 162.



directed westward; first, because the fuel is to be carried eastward to the *āhavanīya* fire, and in the second place, because the patron would fail in the procreation of offspring, if the grass, which represents offspring, should be put down in the wrong way (TB. 3, 2, 10, 3). Because offspring is posterior (*uttaratarā*) to oneself (*in casu*, to the patron), the grass should be placed in the north (*uttaram*); consequently, the fuel, which represents the patron, in the south. When the *āgnīdhra* has established the grass for one deity after the other, the patron is firmly established with offspring and cattle (*ibidem*).

The Taittirīyas prescribe the use of three formulae to consecrate the sprinkling of the points (“to the sky thee”), the middle (“to the intermediate space thee”) and the roots (“to the earth thee”) of the grass (TS. 1, 1, 11 d; TB. 2, 6, 5, 1; BŚ. 1, 13: 19, 17; BhŚ. 2, 7, 15; ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 1): “it is for these (three) worlds, indeed, that he sprinkles (it)” (TB. 3, 3, 6, 3; 2, 6, 5, 2)<sup>63</sup>. That means that the potency which is supposed to be peculiar to the *barhis* should benefit the tripartite universe. Elsewhere the same formulae accompany the sprinkling of the same three parts of the post of the *sadas* (tent or shed on the sacrificial ground) (VS. 5, 26; cf. TS. 1, 3, 1 d); “he thereby endows the (three) worlds with strength (vigour, food, *ūrj*) and sap (essence, *rasa*)” (ŚB. 3, 6, 1, 12); or the sprinkling of the *yūpa* (the sacrificial stake of the animal sacrifice) – which is said to be a “thunderbolt” (*vajra*) – in order to protect the tripartite universe (3, 7, 1, 5; cf. TS. 1, 3, 6 a). As TS. 7, 1, 11 f they accompany the sprinkling of the horse (*aśvamedha*); “he sprinkles him for the three worlds” (TB. 3, 8, 7, 3), which, in view of the context, may be taken to serve a similar purpose.

The Taittirīya-Saṃhitā gives some interesting additional information. In spreading the *barhis*, which represents offspring, on the *vedi*, which represents the earth (see also 6, 2, 4, 5), one establishes offspring firmly on the earth (similarly, MS. 3, 8, 6: 102, 3). The officiant spreads it so as not to be overlooked<sup>64</sup> and makes (the patron) thereby not to be overlooked by (his) offspring and cattle (2, 6, 5, 2). As a result of the spreading of the *barhis* which is said to be the best part of plants again revive (6, 2, 4, 5; 6, 3, 9, 5).

Strewing the *barhis* means making the *vedi* pure and fit for sacrificing (*medhya*, MS. 3, 8, 6: 102, 1).

In KŚ. 8, 1, 16 the enclosing sticks (*paridhi*), *prastara*, *vidhṛti* and *barhis* mentioned in the preceding *sūtras* are collectively referred to as a set of four (*catuṣṭayam*). BŚ. 6, 12: 168, 20 speaks of *barhiṣcatuṣṭayam*: in the chapter on the *agniṣṭoma* the assistants are enjoined “to put down the vessel in which the oblations had been prepared with the scrapings (the leavings of this food), the spoon for stirring up these oblations (*mekṣaṇa*), the broom, and that set of four with a view to the concluding rite”. This direction is based on TS. 6, 1, 5, 5 “he offers the concluding oblation in the scrapings of the opening oblation; this is the continuity<sup>65</sup> of the sacrifice” (cf. ĀpŚ. 10, 21, 18; MŚ. 2, 1, 3, 28). Hence also the repeated use of the requisites.

63. Cf. TB. 2, 6, 5, 3 on the anointing of the *vidhṛti*.

64. *anatiḍṣnam*, a curious form translated by Keith: “not very discernible”.

65. Not “course” (Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 492).

Some addenda may find a place here. The *adhvaryu* who performs an animal sacrifice advances, according to BŚ. 4, 4: 112, 18, with the water for sprinkling (consecrating), sprinkles the fuel, the *vedi* and the *barhis* (in this order), and thereupon brings the *barhis* that had been set down near (cf. also TB. 3, 6, 6, 1) and takes the *prastara* in the eastern direction, spreads the *barhis* fivefold, and goes, whilst holding the *prastara* in his hand, eastward, lays the *paridhis* of *kārṣmarya* wood (gmelina arborea, ĀpŚ. 7, 7, 7) round (the fire) and two pieces of firewood on the fire, places the two *vidhrtis* transversely, the *prastara* on the *vidhrtis*, the *juhū* (one of the offering spoons) on the *prastara*, the other (spoons) on the *barhis* (see also 5, 6: 135, 11). After having touched these, turned round to the right, and moved rapidly in the western direction he asks for a number of requisites (see ĀpŚ. 7, 8, 3), among them a quantity of *barhis* grass (*barhirhastā*) which he at a later moment (113, 13) intertwines and strews down with “thou art the seat of the Fathers” (ĀpŚ. 7, 9, 10). See also BŚ. 6, 26: 188, 15; 6, 27: 188, 21; 6, 28: 190, 13 and for the use of a *barhirhastā* also 8, 10: 246, 18 (cf. ĀpŚ. 13, 9, 15).

The *mahāpitryajña*, which is an integral part of the *sākamedha* ritual (one of the seasonal sacrifices), is considered to be a sacrifice for the Fathers as well as the gods, that is to say for the Fathers regarded and worshipped as gods (see, e.g., MS. 1, 10, 17: 157, 9; KS. 36, 12: 78, 16; TB. 1, 6, 8, 2; BhŚ. 8, 16, 7; ĀpŚ. 8, 13, 5). Hence directions such as the following. For the Fathers he cuts (*dāti*<sup>66</sup>) the *barhis* at the roots – “what has (in connected with the) roots belongs to the Fathers<sup>67</sup>; ... he spreads southward, for the turning south characterizes the Fathers”; “in that (he cuts it) without roots (therefore) it belongs to the gods, for both (Fathers and gods) are worshipped” –. They surround (the *vedi*, cf. TB. 1, 6, 8, 6 f.); the Fathers, one should know, are hidden from yonder sun and, moreover, hidden from the gods and men; their world is hidden from the world of men (TB. 6). That is why they surround. He spreads the *barhis* contiguously (around, MS.) – “he moves in a circle whilst spreading the *barhis*” (KS.) –, for these seasons are contiguously surrounded. The Fathers who are seated on the *barhis* represent the months according to the seasons in which they have died (TB. 3). “He who moves about a sacrifice to the Fathers goes away from this world; in that he moves again in a circle without strewing he turns towards this world”.

After the *bahispavamānastotra* the *agnīdh* is in the usual way requested to spread the fires, strew the *barhis*, to prepare the cakes and go on with the victim (ŚB. 4, 2, 5, 11; GB. 2, 2, 16). Complying with the request this officiant kindles the fires (on the *dhiṣṇya* hearths), strews the *barhis* with the intention to offer to the gods on the kindled fires and proceeds with the cakes and so on. See also TS. 6, 3, 1, 2; MS. 3, 8, 10: 110, 7 ff.; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 19 f. etc.

Whereas the *hotar* should – according to the rules for the sacrifices of full and new moon (i.e. the normal paradigm) – move on between the *utkara* and the *praṇūta* water and tread with his right fore-foot on the *barhis* (of the *vedi*, ŚŚ. 1, 4, 1; ĀśvŚ. 1, 1, 23), he should not do this at the *pitryeṣṭi* on the occasion of a *sākamedha* (3,

66. Cf. comm. on Pāṇini 7, 4, 46, combining the verbal adjective *dāta* with *barhis*.

67. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 123.

16, 18). No motivation is given, but it is in this connexion not the only act that is omitted or performed otherwise. In the former case (ĀśvŚ. 1, 1, 23) the *holar* places his left foot outside of the *vedi* and has the fingers of his hands singly wide apart and then again his hands closely joined (see comm. on ĀśvŚ.). This posture and these gestures no doubt signify his mood, the initial doubt and hesitation and the subsequent resolution which are also expressed in the words which he is to mutter: "Unto whom shall I go? ...; so much shall I do for thee, O Viṣṇu ...". In the *pitryeṣṭi* these words are omitted (ŚŚ. 3, 16, 19)<sup>68</sup>.

In the discussions and explanations of the sacrifices of full and new moon, the sacrifice to the Fathers which belongs to the *sākamedha* and the *soma* ceremonies the *adhvaryu* is said to sprinkle first the fuel and then the *vedi* (ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 1 f.; 2, 6, 1, 14; 3, 6, 3, 14 (with VS. 2, 1), making it ritually pure for the *barhis*); thereupon he puts the *barhis* down with the knot towards the east (VS. 2, 1), sprinkles it, making it ritually pure for the spoons, pours out the lustral water on the lower ends of the stalks (VS. 2, 2 "a moistening art thou for Aditi") – Aditi is the earth, he thus moistens the roots of the plants which remain moist even if their tops are dry (1, 3, 3, 4) – and unties the knots (1, 3, 3, 5 etc.).

Sprinkled water – especially holy water duly prepared and endowed with special power – purifies, bestows sacredness and community with the divine, and brings about a renewal and a particular condition or quality that is made known by a name. Thus the sprinkling of the *barhis* is a creative deed; it consecrates the grass and gives it its name which is believed to be an essential part of, or even to be identical with, its bearer, the grass itself, which after being sprinkled is what it should be during the performance of the sacrifice. After the sprinkling water has been duly purified – "you have been purified through Viṣṇu's spirit"<sup>69</sup> (ĀpŚ. 1, 11, 9; MŚ. 1, 1, 3, 13; cf., e.g., also BhŚ. 1, 11, 12) – and other formulae have been muttered over it (BhŚ. 2, 7, 12; ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 1; cf. 1, 11, 10) in which the water is requested to "lead forward this sacrifice" (TS. 1, 1, 5, 1 b; VS. 1, 12), the *adhvaryu* addresses the *brahman* ("O *brahman*, I shall sprinkle") and, impelled by him, sprinkles the *vedi* and the *barhis* three times, the latter with the formula "thou art the *barhis*" (BŚ. 1, 13: 19, 15; BhŚ. 2, 7, 14; ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 1; VaikhŚ. 5, 5: 56, 4; MŚ. 1, 2, 5, 23 etc.). Thereupon the patron implores the favour and assistance of the grasses (ĀpŚ. 4, 6, 1; VaikhŚ. 1. 7). By this rite the *adhvaryu* makes the *barhis* ritually pure (*medhya*) for the spoons (VS. 2, 1; ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 3: the above formula is continued: "I sprinkle thee, agreeable to the spoons"). See also MŚ. 1, 2, 5, 24 "having sprinkled the *barhis* he places it on the western side of the *vedi*". The above mantra "thou art the *barhis*" does not, as far as I am able to see, occur in the domestic manuals with the exception of VaiG. 1, 10: 11, 10<sup>70</sup>.

The series of formulae handed down as AVŚ. 5, 26 (AVP. 7, 2), which in Kauś. 23, 1 is quoted in a ceremony of consecration of a new house and in the *paddhati*

68. Compare the symbolism of the position of the *adhvaryu's* feet in BhŚ. 2, 13, 7 ff.; ĀpŚ. 2, 13, 7 ff. (notice the accompanying mantras).

69. Remember that Viṣṇu "is" the sacrifice (e.g. ŚB. 12, 4, 1, 5).

70. See J. Gonda, The āghāra ritual of the Vaikhānasas. Torino (Turin) 1981, p. 15.

(manual for rites, see the note to Kauś. 19, 1) is one of the mantras used in order to become prosperous, associates – grammatically in several ways – a number of gods (Agni, Savitar, Indra, the Wives, the Maruts, Aditi, Viṣṇu, Tvaṣṭar, Bhaga, Soma, Indra, the Aśvins) with sacrificial formulae (*yajus*, Agni), sacrificial worship (*yajña*, Savitar), praise and rejoicing (*ukthāmada*, Indra) etc. – Aditi in st. 6 with the *barhis* and (the vessels for) the sprinkling waters (see below). In a similar briefly worded enumeration occurring in TĀ. 3, 8, 1 f., known as *sambhārayajūmsi* “the *yajus* formulae for the requisites”, the first three associations are identical, but the plants are combined with the *barhis*, Aditi with the *vedi* and the Waters with the vessels for the sprinkling water. In MS. 1, 9, 2 and KS. 9, 10 the first three associations are, again, the same – just as some others – but in both texts the complementary pair water and *barhis* (*apaś ca barhiś ca*, remember AVŚ. 5, 26, 6) is, in a grammatically different way, associated with a deity, in MS. with Aditi – these combinations are in view of the character of the *barhis* and its relation to Aditi intelligible – , in KS. with the Maruts (who bring rain and water, RV. 1, 38, 7 f.; 5, 54, 8; 7, 56, 16 etc.).

In a section on the *aponaptṛīya* (i.e. the oblation prepared by mixing two sorts of water<sup>71</sup>) the author of KB. 12, 2 (12, 1, 22 ff.; cf. AiB. 2, 20, 27) stating that the officiant concludes with RV. 10, 30, 15 in which the waters are said to have come to the *barhis*<sup>72</sup> declares this stanza to be an appropriate and consequently perfect mantra which serves to make the sacrifice successful. That means that the *barhis* is regarded as being concerned in this rite, and as being the place where to put the water.

According to TS. 1, 7, 5, 2 f. “that place abounds in pasturage and in water (*udaka*) where the *barhis* and the waters (*āpaḥ*) are; the *vedi* is the proper resort (functional, regular, systematic position, *āyatana*) of the patron of the sacrifice; in that he pours out the full bowl within the *vedi*, he establishes good (an abundance of) pasturage and an abundance of water in his own *āyatana*”.

When, on the occasion of a *soma* ceremony the *upasadiṣṭi* and the animal sacrifice for Agni-and-Soma<sup>73</sup> is to be performed<sup>74</sup>, one should use the *barhis* grass that was employed for the *āithyeṣṭi* (BhŚ. 12, 2, 8; 10; cf. 10, 21, 1 f.; 12, 16, 2; ĀpŚ. 11, 2, 11; 11, 16, 4; and also the enclosing sticks, *prastara* and *vidhṛtis* of that former *iṣṭi*, KŚ. 8, 1, 16). Some authorities are even of the opinion that the same *barhis* grass should not be strewn again for the *upasads* and animal sacrifices but could remain on the *vedi* (ĀpŚ. 11, 2, 12). AiB. 1, 25, 1, on which this rule is based, explains it as follows: “The *āithyeṣṭi* is the head of the sacrifice, the *upasads* are the neck; they take place on the same *barhis*, for the head and the neck are the same”. This custom signifies uninterrupted continuity, the guest offering constituting the preliminary offerings of the *upasads* and the *upasads* the after-offerings of the great-offering<sup>75</sup>.

71. See Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. 138 f.

72. Keith, Rīgveda brāhmaṇas, p. 414 should have written “has come” instead of “across”.

73. Then a twig of *plakṣa* should be tied up along with the *barhis* (BhŚ. 12, 16, 2); cf. ŚB. 3, 8, 3, 10.

74. See Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. 67 f.

75. For references and a translation of the relevant texts see Caland, Śraut. Āpast. II, p. 190 f. (on ĀpŚ. 10, 31, 15).

In particular circumstances however, the material of which the *barhis* consists is not the usual sacrificial grass. In the sacrifice described on behalf of a person desirous to perform an incantation rite ŚB. 3, 8, 1 ff. it should consist of reeds (*sara*, § 20) in order to hurt (*śrityai*) (the rival, comm., assuming etymological relationship of these words; *sara* means also "arrow"). The same material is used in a special animal sacrifice performed by a man who wishes to practise witchcraft (TS. 2, 1, 5, 7); then the sacrificial post is shaped like a wooden sword which is a thunderbolt hurled against the enemy; the reeds of the *barhis* are expected to crush (*śṛṇāti*) him. Likewise, TS. 2, 1, 7, 7; 2, 1, 8, 2; MS. 2, 1, 6; 7, 15.

The performance of the *ātithyeṣṭi* (guest reception: a non-bloody sacrifice performed when the *soma* stalks arrive as a guest<sup>76</sup>) requires some special measures. For instance, the *prastara* should be of *aśvavāla* (saccharum spontaneum) – the shoots of which are the eyelashes of Prajāpati which are now brought together (TS. 6, 2, 1, 5) – the two *vidhṛti* blades of sugar cane and the enclosing sticks of *kārṣṇarya* wood (gmelina arborea) which is a means of smiting away the asuras (TS. ibidem; ĀpŚ. 10, 30, 3; cf. KS. 24, 8: 99, 10; KŚ. 8, 1, 12 ff.; see also ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 16 ff.). According to KŚ. 8, 1, 15 the *barhis* is the normal one (*prākṛtaṃ kauśaṃ bhavati*, comm.). BŚ. 6, 18: 175, 20, says, however, that just as the *prastara* etc., are products of skillful manual work (*śilpavat*), the fuel and the *barhis* should be *śilpavat*.

Occasionally gold<sup>77</sup> may be used instead of blades of grass, called *barhis* and held in the hand. Thus ĀpŚ. 14, 3, 1 f. dealing with the variant of *soma* ceremonies called *śoḍaśin* says that the *adhvaryu* while initiating the *stotra* has gold in his hand which represents the *barhis* (cf. 12, 17, 4; 7; 9). The same custom is recorded in 20, 13, 8 ff. (dealing with the horse sacrifice). According to 21, 6, 17 ff. the wind – produced by using one's garment as a fan – serves the same purpose at a *soma* ceremony of twelve days' duration, or also the apparatus for producing fire (21, 7, 3), and water (§ 9) in which one has put *avakā* plants; this water has to be shaken so that it makes a sound, PB. 7, 8, 12; LŚ. 3, 5, 13 ff.; cf. also JB. 3, 115<sup>78</sup>. The movement and the sound produced by these objects are essential; remember 12, 7, 4: the *adhvaryu* leading the way and moving the grass to and fro pronounces a mantra on the word which going in front must go to the gods, and the mantras in 7 and 9.

Even in connexion with the *vedi* the term *barhis* does not always denote exactly the same layer of grass. When after the *bahiṣpavamāna* has been chanted the *agnīdh* is requested to spread the fires and strew the cakes, the *barhis* consists of an uninterrupted layer of twigs and (or) grass (*ulāpa*) laid along the spine of the *vedi*, i.e. along the line from the middle of its back to the middle of its front side<sup>79</sup> (ŚB. 4, 2, 5, 11).

76. See Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 53 ff.

77. I refer to the index.

78. And Caland, Śr. Āpast. III, p. 275.

79. For layers of this type by which two objects are without interruption connected see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 82; 118; 393; Caland, in ZDMG 51, p. 133; in RV. 10, 142, 3 Geldner translated "Gestrüpp", Renou (E.V.P. XIV, p. 31) "taillis" ("thicket, underwood"), in AVŚ. 7, 66, 1 Whitney and Lanman "bushes", but the comm. on KŚ. 25, 3, 7 explains it by *lṅanarti* "grass that has been rolled or wrapped round, a pad consisting of grass". See Eggeling, Śat. Br. II, p. 312, n. 2.



Mention of the *barhis* is of course often made in invitations addressed to the gods. In ŚB. 1, 7, 2, 17 “sit down on this *barhis*” is one of the invitatory formulae used in performing sacrifices. Among the formulae which the *maitrāvaruṇa* addresses to the *hotar* in order to prompt him to recite the oblation-stanzas is, e.g., “smiling at Indra and the gods, let them (Dawn and Dusk) sit down on this *barhis*” (TB. 3, 6, 2, 2 g). See also TB. 2, 7, 12, 5; 3, 6, 3, 4 i; 3, 7, 6, 5 h and TS. 1, 1, 13, 3 o; 1, 7, 13, 4; 2, 4, 14, 5; 2, 6, 12, 6 q; 4, 4, 4, 3 i; 4, 1, 11, 3 n “like birds they (the Maruts) sat on the dear *barhis*”; MS. 2, 13, 9: 158, 9; 4, 12, 1: 179, 8; 4, 13, 2: 200, 14; KS. 15, 13: 220, 5; 16, 20: 243, 16; 38, 6: 107, 17. – For the scattering of sacrificial food on the *barhis*<sup>80</sup> see, e.g., MS. 1, 6, 8: 99, 1: the oblations for the three forms of Agni are presented on the same *barhis* (in order to have room left for procreating offspring (KS. 8, 8: 92, 6)<sup>81</sup>. – As to the Fathers eating the offerings that are set out on the *barhis* see, e.g., TS. 2, 6, 12, 2 e and the mantra in ŚB. 14, 2, 2, 35 “hail to the Fathers, (seated) upon the *barhis*, and drinking the *gharma* (the hot milk of the *pravargya*)”. In the mantra in which the Fathers are invited to the offerings and requested not to carry off the speaker (BŚ. 2, 9: 47, 18) they are supposed to sit down on the *barhis* or rather at the *barhis* (“at table”), but what is set ready is *erakopabarhaṇe* “eraka grass and cushions”.

The man who performs the Yamayajña should cover the *uttaravedī* – the new offering place, constructed within the sacrificial area at the eastern end of the *mahāvedī* – with *darbha*, place the *viṣṭara* (a handful of rushes or grass for sitting upon) and the (couch or seat called) *prastara* by means of *darbha*, the tops of which are turned towards the east and invoke the god, requesting him to sit down on the *barhis* (BGŚ. 1, 21, 7)<sup>82</sup>.

The presence of the gods on the *barhis* is believed to benefit its owner. For instance, the invitatory formula to be pronounced by the *maitrāvaruṇa* occupied with the animal sacrifice for the oblation to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt is an insistent prayer: “To this one (i.e. the patron), on whose *barhis* thou hast sat down together with the gods, the days must be happy” (TB. 3, 6, 8, 2 e, cf. ṚV. 7, 11, 2).

In the texts of the Kauṣītakins mention is made of a remarkable rite. The *hotar*, performing the ceremonies of full or new moon, finishes his recitation with the formula “at this (sacrifice with a) successful *hotar* office which goes to the gods the patron, N.N., prays for ... a long life-time, abundant progeny, a heavenly abode ... What he prays for through this oblation, may he obtain that ... The god Agni must acquire that from the gods and we, men, from Agni ... This homage (shall be paid) to the gods” (ŚŚ. 1, 14, 16 ff.). Thereupon he places his open hands side by side and slightly hollowed – the well-known *añjali* gesture, expressing salutation, reverence etc.<sup>83</sup> – on the *barhis* pointing eastwards and muttering “for homage” (*nama*

80. Notice also the formula *barhiṣ agniṣ agna ājyasya vetu*, e.g. ĀśvŚ. 2, 8, 6 on which see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 520 f., n., 530, n., and 570.

81. For offering on separate *barhiṃsi* see also KS. 8, 9: 93, 10; ŚB. 2, 2, 1, 16.

82. Some other references to the use of *barhis* in domestic rites are BGŚ. 4, 2, 2 (required in a *bali* sacrifice); 5, 1, 6 *pavitre* taken from *barhis* (*agnimukha* ritual); 7 (*darbhahiḥ praticchādya*); for *trṇa* 5, 1, 27 f.

83. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 66 f.

*upa*, ŚŚ. 20; KB. 3, 8 (3, 10, 27). It is clear that this homage is paid to the invisible gods who are believed to be seated on the *barhis*, which is a means of coming into contact with them and of transmitting the prayers and homage to them.

Occasionally, (a) human being(s) are found to be sitting down on what is called a *barhis*. “If a brahmin is desirous of something, he should observe a fast for three days and nights whilst sitting down on a *barhis* (spread ritual grass) facing towards the east and restraining his speech and repeat (the syllable *om*) a thousand times” (GB. 1, 1, 22). This seat is probably believed to bring that brahmin into contact with the divine and to crown his endeavour with success. – But in cases such as Manu 3, 208 the invited brahmins who at a *śrāddha* ceremony are seated *āsaneṣūpakṣeṣu barhiṣmatsu* have, as Kullūka rightly observed, seats on which *kuṣa* grass has been spread (*sakuṣeṣu*). – On the occasion of the *sarpaṇa*<sup>84</sup> ĀśvŚ. 5, 2, 8 enjoins the *hotar* to sit down with the others and to mutter the mantra “the *soma* drink of the gods here, at the sacrifice, on the *barhis*, on the *vedi*, of this also we are drinking”. Quoting it the author of AiB. 2, 22, 6 observes that in this way his self (person) is not excluded from the drinking of *soma*.

On various occasions non-consecrated participants in a sacrificial rite are not allowed to partake of sacrificial food but may smell it (see, e.g., MŚ. 4, 3, 35; ŚŚ. 5, 10, 28 f. (*pravargya*), MŚ. 5, 2, 16, 6 (*soma* ceremony)). After these *prānabhakṣāḥ* have been “consumed” they are thrown on the *barhis* (ĀśvŚ. 2, 19, 30).

The *prāṣitra*, a portion cut off from the oblation and eaten by the *brahman* priest, should be looked at by this functionary and then placed down in the *prāṣitra* pot on the bare ground of the *vedi* after (some) blades of the *barhis* grass have been pushed aside. (Thus KŚ. 2, 2, 17: *apohya barhūṃṣi (brahmā ... veder dakṣiṇāmsadeṣe stṛṭāni barhūṃṣi apasārya*, comm.)). BhŚ. 3, 17, 6 and ĀpŚ. 3, 19, 7 have the *brahman* with the mantra “I place thee on the navel of the earth”<sup>85</sup> – i.e. in the centre of the world, the sacrificial place from which it is possible to reach heaven – push away the *trṇāni* within the *vedi*. Adding to the mantra the words “in the lap of Aditi” (cf. ŚB. 1, 1, 2, 23) ŚŚ. 4, 7, 6 has it placed on the *sthaṇḍila*, an open piece of bare ground used for sacrificial purposes<sup>86</sup>, ĀśvŚ. 1, 13, 1, on *kuṣa* grass (*kuṣeṣu: antarvedikuṣeṣu*, comm.); MŚ. 5, 2, 16 on the *barhis* in the south. This difference of opinion has probably taken its rise in consideration given to the wording of the mantra: should not something placed in Aditi’s lap be put down on the bare ground?

When the gods, being in conflict with the asuras, had deposited their property in Agni, and this god did not give it back after the victory of his colleagues, they sought to take it from him by force. Thereupon he wept and his tear became silver. That is why silver is not a suitable gift (for the officiants). “He who gives it on the *barhis*, in his house before the year is out they weep (owing to death)” (TS. 1, 5, 1, 1 f.). A sacrificial gift, offering made to the priests, usually consists of cows, other animals, or gold (e.g. ŚB. 4, 5, 1, 15), a garment (BŚ. 13, 1: 120, 4) etc. in the more complicated ceremonies, but of the *anvāhārya* rice which is placed on the *vedi* (BhŚ.

84. See p. 178 below.

85. See, e.g., M. Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, New York 1959, p. 38 ff.

86. Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 43 f. etc.

3, 3, 11; ĀpŚ. 3, 3, 14) for other sacrifices (cf. ŚB. 11, 1, 3, 7). Other references to this customs are TS. 2, 5, 6, 3 “by him who knowing thus performs the sacrifices of full and new moon regarding himself as possessing an oblation-receptacle, all is given by him on the *barhis* (*barhisyam*)<sup>87</sup>”; MS. 1, 8, 7: 126, 16; KS. 6, 6: 55, 15 Prajāpati mentally demarcated this earth as the *vedi* for the one who performs the *agnihotra*. “Whatever he gives there (on the earth), that (is given as it were) on the *barhis*”; here the verb “to give” is used in a general sense<sup>88</sup>; KapS. 4, 5: 43, 8.

In BŚ. 2, 19: 66, 2 it is the *pr̥sthīyā*, i.e. the edge which runs along the back of a *vedi* (cf. KŚ. 8, 3, 12), that is strewn with *barhis* which has been brought by an assistant who had to cut it (*barhirlāva*).

The words *ucchrayasva vanaspatē* “stand up erect, O tree” (RV. 3, 8, 3; VS. 4, 10; ŚB. 3, 2, 1, 35 etc.) addressed to the stake of *udumbara* wood which, representing the patron (MS. 3, 8, 9: 108, 9), is to become the highest and central pillar of the *sadas*<sup>89</sup> (BhŚ. 12, 9, 12) are in MS. 1, 2, 11: 20, 17 and ĀpŚ. 11, 9, 13 followed by “associated with the divine *barhis*”. The formulae prescribed by the other authorities are different, invoking the co-operation of deities and asking the pillar to prop the sky to fill the intermediate space and to make the earth firm (VS. 5, 27; PB. 6, 4, 2), to strengthen the brahmins etc. and to win health and increase of wealth (TS. 1, 3, 1 k, 1) and so on. Since the *barhis* has no part in the erection proper and can hardly be said to stand up or stand erect, the reference to it in MS. must be explained by the direction given in ĀpŚ. 11, 9, 11 and 7, 9, 10: in the hole in the ground in which the pillar is to be placed grass, called *barhis*, has been strewn (*barhiḥāvastīrya*) which obviously is supposed to contribute to the result of the rite. As to this grass, called *barhis*, this is TS. 6, 2, 10, 3 f. spread with the formula “thou art the seat of the Fathers”, “for what is dug in (to the ground) has the Fathers for its deity”. “If he were to set it up without strewing (that *barhis*), it (the pillar) would be dug in and have the Fathers for its deity. He sets it up after strewing; verily he sets it up in the earth and makes it well-rooted (*svāruham*, i.e. *svasambaddham* “closely and spontaneously adapted to, fitting in (with the hole), Sāyaṇa”). That means that here again the grass is a protective intermediate layer preventing the pillar from coming into contact with the subterranean world. In TS. 6, 3, 4, 2 the same passage occurs in connexion with the sacrificial stake. See also KS. 25, 10: 118, 4 (see also 26, 5: 127, 15) and KapS. 40, 3: 224, 16 with the mantra “I strew thee, the world (*loka*) that is inhabited by the Fathers”: “verily, if they should set it up without a *barhis*, it would be a *garta* (i.e. “a hollow, hole”, but the world means also “grave”). In the upper part of the earth are plants; he sets it up in the upper part of the earth, he has made it not-buried-in-a-*garta*”; MS. 3, 8, 9: 107, 15 “in that he strews (the grass), he makes that ritually pure; what has been dug in is ritually impure; in the upper part of the earth are the plants; in that he strews (the

87. For another use of this adjective see TS. 2, 6, 12, 3; MS. 4, 10, 6: 156, 14 *barhisyeṣu nidhiṣu* “in their places, homes, on the *barhis*” (of the Fathers).

88. On this place see H.W. Bodewitz, *The daily evening and morning offering*, Leiden 1976, p. 140; 143.

89. See Caland and Henry, *L'agniṣṭoma*, p. 94 ff. and Caland, on ĀpŚ. 11, 9, 3 (Śr. Āpast. II, p. 213).

grass) he sets it up in her upper part; it has become not-dug-in (*anikhātā*)". See also ŚB. 3, 6, 1, 14 "he strews *barhis* (grass) therein ...; as though it (the pillar) were not dug in, (but naturally) established among plants and not dug in, so does it become established among those plants".

In a discussion of the setting up of the sacrificial stake (*yūpa*) it reads (ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 3): "... he lays down the stake with the top towards the east. Thereupon he puts *barhīmsi* of the same size and thereupon he puts the chip of the stake". The *barhis* serves as an underlayer as well as a means of separating the chip from the stake. At a later moment this grass is thrown into the hole, but then both KŚ. 6, 2, 18 – which in 12 had used *kuśamuṣṭi* – and ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 7 speak of *barhīmsi*, which the comm. on KŚ. explains as *asamskṛtān kuśān* "blades of *kuśa* grass not made fit for ritual use".

Whereas the author of KŚ. 8, 5, 24, being concerned with the pouring of the remnants of the sprinkling water into the resounding holes and the placing of ordinary grass upon them, refers to the latter act with *avastaraṇa*, the comm. describes the grass used as *barhis* (plur.) turned east and north. Were they taken from the *barhis* on the *vedi*? Similarly, in 33, dealing with the hole in which the staff of *udumbara* wood is to be erected; here, however, the comm. refers to KŚ. 6, 2, 12, where the text, dealing with the erection of the sacrificial post, has the word *kuśa*; but in § 18 *kuśān* is the comm.'s explanation of *barhīmsi* in the text. – It may be remembered that a comm. on ŚB. 2, 4, 2, 17 speaks of *barhīmsi* as against ŚŚ. 4, 4, 2, which likewise in connexion with the *piṇḍapitryajña* uses the noun *kuśa* to denote the grass on which water is offered to the deceased ancestors to wash their hands (ŚB. § 16)<sup>90</sup>.

The term *barhis* could also be applied to the grass that is spread round the ritual fire. Says BŚ. 2, 13: 54, 14: "When the sun has risen above the trees, he asks for all kinds of plants (*sarvaśadham*), the vessel for the clarified butter, the sacrificial ladles (*śruc* and *sruva*), *barhis*, a garment, and chips of wood for kindling the fire ... Thereupon he strews these chips, spreads the *barhis* round the fire, melts the butter etc."<sup>91</sup>.

In a good many of works mention is made of two blades of grass which the *adhvaryu* has to hand over either to the *udgātar* or to the *prastotar* when he initiates the chanting of the *bahispavamāna stotra* (see, e.g., ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 6)<sup>92</sup>. In this connexion BŚ. 7, 8: 212, 19 – after having wanted the *adhvaryu* to touch water (a purificatory or protective rite often enjoined as a safeguard against evil results and so on upon a person who is to perform some ritual<sup>93</sup>) and to take hold of two blades of *darbha* (7, 7: 212, 8) – speaks of *barhiṣī* "two *barhis* blades". The reader is under the impression that these grasses are identical with the *barhiṣī* (7, 6: 210, 2) which were held across over the cup when the *soma* – for the sake of which these rites are performed – was filtered (see also 210, 10; 11)<sup>94</sup> and thus formed a device for ensuring conti-

90. Compare also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 174.

91. On this passage see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 85.

92. I refer to Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 169 ff., esp. p. 177 ff.

93. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 128.

94. See, e.g., also ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 5; 12, 4, 4, 6.

nulty (cf. 14, 6: 162, 1 emphasizing the importance of continuity). The blades of grass are given either with the mantra “thou art the underlying layer of Ṛgveda and Sāmaveda for the generation of a pair” (*mithunasya*, male and female) or without a mantra. Now, other instances of ritual pairs or dualities are far from lacking; generally speaking, special significance is not infrequently attached to doubling or double occurrence or performance<sup>95</sup>. The Ṛgveda on which the Sāmaveda is chanted is regarded as the latter’s wife (cf. ŚB. 8, 1, 3, 5) and by this pair one reaches the end of the sacrifice (cf. 3, 1, 1, 12 and, e.g., also TB. 3, 8, 22, 3). In this connexion it may be parenthetically noticed that on seats destined for the gods or for men a pair of grass blades (*kuśadvayam*) is normally placed, on seats for the Fathers one the points of which are turned to the south<sup>96</sup>.

Śālīki was of the opinion that one should take these two blades of grass from the *sadas* (BŚ. 21, 18: 101, 15). Thereupon the *adhvaryu* should, by means of these blades, undertake the rite of the *pavamāna stotra*. Whilst being on his way this officiant shakes these two objects (*barhīṣī*, 7, 8: 212, 16). When those who have gone in procession after him sit down he hands them over to the *udgātar* or to the *prastotar* either with the mantra “thou art the substratum of the *ṛc* verses and the *sāmans* in order to bring forth a pair (*mithuna*)” – which clearly refers to the blades forming a pair and to the productive character of the rite – or without a formula (see also 21, 18: 102, 3 ff.). Then he initiates the *stotra* with a prayer for vital breath addressed to some important gods who are said to be represented by the *sāman*, the chanters etc. But BhŚ. 13, 17, 2, ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 7 and HŚ. 8, 4 speak of the handing over of a *darbhamuṣṭi*, the first text prescribing a mantra in which the *soma* is said to be purified and the last two texts adding a mention of two blades of grass in connexion with the subsequent beginning of the *stotras* other than the *pavamānas* (ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 9; HŚ. *ibidem*; VaikhŚ. 15, 19 likewise). The second practice is obviously – in accordance with other ritual customs – a shorter and more simple form of the rite. MŚ. 2, 3, 6, 4; 6 speaks of a *darbhamuṣṭi*.

The authorities of the White Yajurveda adopted a somewhat different procedure. According to KŚ. 9, 6, 32 ff. (also ŚB. 4, 2, 5, 3) the *adhvaryu*, departing first, takes two blades of grass from (those spread on) the *vedi* (*veditr̥ṇe*). One of these he throws into the *cātvāla* (the pit near the *mahāvedī*) with VS. 7, 26, in which the *cātvāla* is said to be the way by which the gods ascended (viz. to the heavenly world, ŚB. 5, adding: “he thus makes the patron look along the road to heaven”). (Compare LŚ. 2, 1, 6; DŚ. 4, 1, 7; at LŚ. 2, 2, 3; DŚ. 4, 1, 15 the word used is *tr̥ṇa*, not *barhīṣ*). He then throws the other blade of grass silently in front of the chanters (KŚ. 35). “For the chanters represent the *stomas* (forms of chanting the *stotras*), and Prajāpati (who is the sacrifice); thus this god who takes hold of, and enters into, this All, does not take hold of the *adhvaryu*” (ŚB. 6). By this act the *adhvaryu* so to say maintains his independence and unimpaired condition. Thereupon he makes the *stotra* begin

95. For many particulars see Gonda, The dual deities in the religion of the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1974, p. 66 ff.

96. See, e.g., Kullūka, on Manu 3, 208, quoting Devala (on whom see Kane, Hist. of Dharmaśāstra, I, p. 120 f.). As to the numbers see also Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 29 f.; generally speaking, even numbers are auspicious, uneven inauspicious.



saying “Soma becomes pure” (ŚB. 7) – during the first *stotra* called *pavamāna* the *soma* becomes clarified (*pavate*) – and gives a pair of grass-blades (*tr̥ṇe*) to the *prastotar* (KŚ. 36)<sup>97</sup>. No mention is made of the provenance of these blades, the use of which is in the commentary said to have been adopted from the other branch of the Yajurveda. This may account for the fact that the *adhvaryu* may alternatively either omit the presentation of the two blades or hand over a handful of *kuśa* grass (*kuśamuṣṭi*, KŚ. 9, 6, 38; 9, 7, 1).

Some other customs are mentioned in the sāmavedic śrautasūtras. LŚ. 1, 11, 17 and DŚ. 3, 3, 26 enjoin those who take part in the procession to cast away some blades of grass separately southwards with the mantra PB. 1, 3, 3 in which Varuṇa is requested “to blow away the weapon(s) of the malignant ones”. This is no doubt a protective measure adopted to keep off the demons and evil spirits that might approach from the south<sup>98</sup>: in a commentary mention is made of touching water for the same purpose. When the *prastotar* has received the *prastara*, the provenance of which is obviously assumed to be known to the reader, he gives it to the *udgātar*, who should stroke his right shank with it (LŚ. 1, 12, 2; DŚ. 3, 4, 17). It may be remembered<sup>99</sup> that from the right side the semen is discharged and that hence it is on the right thigh of the *udgātar* that fire must be churned (PB. 8, 7, 10 and 12, 10, 12) and also that in a rite (Kauś. 12, 12) by means of which one desires to bestow brilliant vital power, (energy and prestige, *varcas*) upon a girl with AV. 5, 3, which implores protection and blessings, one should gaze at her right thigh over which the text is pronounced. My first impression is therefore that in LŚ. 1, 12, 2 etc. the *udgātar* performs a protective action by means of the potency of the grass, lest his own ritual proficiency should be impaired. Notice that after having initiated the *stoma* he has to mutter the mantra “food I shall make, food there will be, food I will create” (PB. 1, 3, 6). After having chanted the *stotra* he pronounces the mantra PB. 1, 3, 7 “I have made food ...”. Thereupon “he should bring the patron into immediate contact with the *prastara*” (comm.) and cause him to mutter over it PB. 1, 3, 8 “a falcon art thou (i.e. the *bahiṣpavamāna*, comm.); I take hold of thee, bring me safely across. Joined with Indra may we win. May we enjoy progeny and the refreshing lifesap (*iṣ*)”. As to this mantra see e.g. ŚŚ. 6, 8, 10; ŚB. 12, 3, 4, 3; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 15 etc. However, PB. 6, 7, 21 ff. explains the handling of the *prastara* by the *udgātar* otherwise: he should whilst chanting put it on the ground to prevent the oblation from being spilt; since, however, he then keeps the patron (who is identical with the *prastara*) back from the world of heaven, he should rather chant whilst touching it with his knee so that no sacrificial substance is spilt and the patron is not kept back from the heavenly world. If I am not mistaken, the *prastara* is, in accordance with a typically brāhmaṇa way of arguing, assumed to be at the same time on the ground – see ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 5 “knee-high is this (terrestrial) world”; 9, 1, 1, 11 – and not on the ground<sup>100</sup>. – When the rite has been brought to a conclu-

97. See ch. II, esp. p. 21.

98. For other places attesting to the protection of the sacrifice against demons who live in the south see J. Gonda, The significance of the right side in Vedic ritual, Religion, 2 (1972), p. 12.

99. Gonda, Ibidem, p. 9.

100. Otherwise W. Caland. Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa. Calcutta 1931, p. 119.

sion, the *udgātar* throws the *prastara* into the *cātvāla* after having cut off on both sides a blade of grass, pronouncing the wish that they (those concerned) may mount the heavens, if they have chanted well, or conquer this world, if they have not, that is, if they have gone not far enough or too far in chanting. As is well known the redundant and the defective or deficient contrast not only with what is complete (ŚB. 10, 1, 3, 8) but also with what is right or done in the right way (e.g. TS. 7, 1, 10, 3)<sup>101</sup>; see LŚ. 2, 1, 6; DŚ. 4, 1, 7.

The conclusion seems therefore to be that during the performance of these rites the grass is in more than one form used for more than one purpose. As to the *prastara* or *darbhamuṣṭi* (comm. on PB. 6, 7, 16, also MŚ. 2, 3, 6, 4 and, with the exception of BŚ. 7, 7, in the texts of the Taittirīyas BhŚ. 13, 16, 17 etc.) which is borne by the *adhvaryu* when the officiants are on their way, the explanation given in PB. 6, 7, 17 (thereby the patron is borne to the world of heaven) is in all probability secondary and in any case a product of ritualistic interpretation. But the identification of the sacrifice with a horse that running away came to a standstill by means of a bunch of grass (§ 18)<sup>102</sup> may furnish a clue. The procession has to move forward in a bending or slooping posture (BŚ. 7, 7: 212, 8 ff.; BhŚ. 13, 16, 15; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 3 f.; HŚ. 8, 4; VaikhŚ. 15, 19) (like hunters) proceeding stealthily, licking (their mouths), (cf. also JB. 1, 278: agitated), bending their heads, for the sacrifice is a deer (which they wish to stalk; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 3 f.; PB. 6, 7, 10). So this ritual procedure may judging from the above texts be regarded as an imitation of the conduct of a hunting-party. However, in TS. 6, 3, 1, 1 f. those who creep to the *bahiṣpavamāna* are said to have suffered a loss; when the *bahiṣpavamāna* has been chanted, they have regained the sacrifice (*yajñam evāpajitvā*) and now keep performing it. So this text clearly refers to the temporary loss of the sacrifice.

Now, there are in the brāhmaṇas several stories in which the sacrifice is said to have left the gods and run away<sup>103</sup>, once in the form of a black antelope (ŚB. 1, 1, 4, 1 f.), a second time in the form of a falcon (PB. 14, 3, 10); on that occasion the gods laid hold on it by means of *sāmans*. Once again it was lost and found by means of libations (AiB. 1, 2, 1 ff.), and so on. Even in the present time the sacrifice threatens to go away. At the end of a discussion of the duties of the patron in the sacrifices of full and new moon it reads (TS. 1, 7, 6, 7): “The sacrifice goes away and does not turn back; (but) to him who sacrifices whilst knowing the recovery of the sacrifice (*yajñasya punarālabha*) it turns back. He recovers it by means of the mantra TS. 1, 6, 6, 3 q”. That is why the sacrificer should in order to take hold again of the sacrifice pronounce this mantra: “The sacrifice has come into being; it has come into existence; it has been born; it has waxed great ...” (see BhŚ. 4, 22, 9; ĀpŚ. 4, 16, 12; MŚ. 1, 4, 3, 18; cf. also ŚŚ. 4, 12, 10, and BŚ. 24, 36: 222, 11 (animal sacrifice)).

101. See Gonda, The redundant and the deficient (n. 14 above).

102. PB. 6, 7, 19 recalls the well-known fact that animals turn towards grass (*tṛṇa*) that is being waved before them. Prajāpati, it is observed, was the first to present food – now, significantly enough, called *prastara* – to them in this way when they were hungry.

103. I refer to S. Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice dans les brāhmaṇas, Paris 1898, p. 141 f.; G.U. Thite, Sacrifice in the brāhmaṇa-texts, Poona 1975, p. 17 f.

One might combine this information with the tradition handed down in JB. 1, 82: the participants in the procession steal away to undertake the *bahiṣpavamāna* rite after having done a horrible deed, viz. pressed and killed king Soma. They go, so to say, to the wilderness (*aranya*, JB. 1, 83), where they run the risk of being killed. They have therefore to pronounce a prayer for protection which is for the greater part identical with PB. 1, 3, 2 (see also 6, 7, 2). Now, PB. 6, 7, 18 (see above) is not alone in relating the story of the sacrifice running away and assuming the form of a horse. ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 17 informs us that at one time the sacrifice escaped from the gods, became a horse (*aśva*) and turned away from them<sup>104</sup>. According to JB. 1, 83 the sacrifice is the horse (*vājin*) of the gods. The one who mounts a horse of the gods that is not appeased and not accommodated to circumstances will perish. The *adhvaryu* who bearing the *prastara* participates in the procession pronounces the formula “thus I wipe the horse of the gods” over the animal (in order to please and appease it; cf. PB. 6, 7, 18 *yajñasya śāntyai*). When the horse is appeased he mounts it and he will not fall into misfortune. The conclusion seems to be that in this version of the episode the bunch of grass is a means of protecting oneself from something unappeased that has taken the form of an animal (horse). That bunch is suited to this purpose because enticing, pleasing and appeasing a horse or other animal by a bunch of grass is an everyday occurrence. With a *barhis* one should go to meet a horse or cow that one receives as a *dakṣiṇā*, for it is their *priyaṃ dhāma* (TB. 2, 3, 2, 5), that is “a beloved manifestation of theirs, their beloved presence, an object which is by preference characterized by the presence of their power”<sup>105</sup>. We would probably prefer to say that there exists some relationship or affinity between the grass and the animals.

It will therefore become clear also why it is stated in JB. 1, 83 that with the *bahiṣpavamāna* they praise the sacrifice which they had (re)gained after the example of those who had praised it when it had left its creator Prajāpati. And also, why at the end of the *bahiṣpavamānastotra* the patron of the sacrifice has to follow the chant of the *stotra* with the *yajñasya punarāmbha* (see above; now as TS. 3, 2, 7, 2 m; see BhŚ. 13, 17, 11<sup>106</sup>; ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 18)<sup>107</sup>.

I cannot, however, suppress the following words found in the above-mentioned passage of the JB., viz. 1, 86: “They (*sic*) glide with bended body holding the *prastara* (singular: *prastaraṃ harantaḥ sarpanti*). The *prastara* is the patron of the sacrifice, the *barhis* the (other) creatures (*prajāḥ*, subjects, people in general). In that they hold the *prastara* high above the *barhis* they raise the patron above the other creatures (his subjects). (Cf. TS. 2, 6, 5, 3). For this reason the patron is of much higher

104. It may be noticed that the gods took hold of its tail (*vāla*), tore it out and threw it down in a lump, where it grew up to become the *aśvavāla* grass; therefore the *prastara* is (on the occasion under discussion) to be made of this grass. In another story (TS. 6, 2, 4, 2) the sacrifice went away from the gods in the form of Viṣṇu. The gods sought it (him) grasping (each other's) hands. On this occasion Indra smote a boar after plucking out a bunch of *darbha* grass and piercing seven hills. See also Lévi, La doctrine du sacrifice, l. cit.

105. See J. Gonda, The meaning of the Sanskrit term *dhāma*, Amsterdam Academy 1967.

106. Kashikar, Sūtras of Bharadvāja, II, p. 382 translated; “The sacrifice has prospered ...”?

107. See also Caland and Henry, L'agniṣtoma, p. 180 (and p. 233 f.).

rank then the other creatures (his subjects)". As was often the case, there obviously was no objection to attributing this second function and significance to the *prastara* in the same section that informs us of a use and a 'symbolical value' that are no doubt more original.

As already observed by Oldenberg<sup>108</sup>, many sacrificial utensils – the *prastara*, the *paridhis* etc. – were burnt after the ceremony was over. Every contact<sup>109</sup> may have either good or ill effects. Objects that have been made holy or sacred by contact with deities or with the sacredness of the ritual procedures were often thought to be dangerous (taboo) to those who did no longer require them for sacrificial purposes. They had therefore to be destroyed or rendered harmless (cf. e.g. ŚŚ. 4, 5, 10)<sup>110</sup>. Among these objects is the *barhis*. According to KŚ. 3, 8, 7 the *adhvaryu* throws it, after the concluding oblation, into the fire with VS. 2, 22 a "the *barhis* must anoint itself (be prepared, combine) with sacrificial food (*havis*) (and) ghee (clarified butter)". However, ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 29, explaining this act, does not refer to the "dangerous" character of the *barhis*: "He then offers the *barhis* as an oblation (*juhoti*); the *barhis* is (represents) this world and is (consists of) plants; hence he thereby bestows plants on this world which are firmly established in this world". (Cf. also ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 47; KŚ. 5, 9, 29). BŚ. 1, 21: 33, 4, enjoining the *adhvaryu* to pluck (the blades of grass) out of the layers of the *barhis*<sup>111</sup> and to anoint them within the *dhruvā* (a particular offering spoon, cf. BhŚ. 3, 5, 14), prescribes also the *pādas* b and c of the above mantra: "... must anoint it self (combine) with the Ādityas, Vasus, Maruts, Indra, Viśve Devāḥ". These words may be taken to express the conviction that the *barhis* should remain in the sphere of the divine beings with whom it has come into contact. Thereupon the *adhvaryu* throws it into the fire of the *āhavanīya* (the oblatory hearth) with the words (*pāda* d) "the oblation offered with *svāhā* must go to the heavenly atmosphere", or rather "it must go to the h. a., *svāhā*". This mantra, quoted from TB. 3, 7, 5, 10 is in BhŚ. 4, 18, 1 and ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 3 used when the *prastara*, not the *barhis*, is being smeared. The significance of this act is also brought out by VS. 18, 63 (ŚB. 9, 5, 1, 48) "with *prastara*, *paridhi*, *sruc* (a spoon), *vedī* and *barhis*, with the *ṛc* lead this sacrifice of ours unto heaven, to go to the gods (and to remain there, locative)". According to BŚ. 8, 21: 262, 14 the mantra which is to accompany the concluding oblation (*udayanīyeṣṭi*) is TS. 3, 5, 5, 3 f. "all the fire-sticks that are thine, O Agni, on the earth, on the *barhis*, in the sun, let these approach (thine) oblation of ghee, a protection to the sacrificer who wishes to come into contact with the gods"<sup>112</sup>.

The destruction of the *barhis* at the end of a sacrifice is called *barhirhoma*<sup>113</sup>: Vait.

108. H. Oldenberg, Die Religion des Veda, Stuttgart und Berlin 1923, p. 345, n. 4; see also Hillebrandt, Neu- und Vollmondsopfer, p. 145; 148, 169; J. Schwab, Das altindische Thieropfer, Erlangen 1886, p. 121; 155 ff.

109. Gonda, Vedic ritual, ch. IV.

110. When the animal is offered in sacrifice, the officiant casts the *barhis*, having anointed it on the thick part, away with the words "thou art the share of the *rakṣases*"; "verily he appeases the *rakṣases* with the blood (of the victim)" (TS. 6, 3, 9, 2).

111. ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 7 uses the term *prastara*.

112. See also Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 406.

113. See Hillebrandt, Altind. Neu- und Vollmondsopfer, p. 169 f.

30, 21 “after the *barhirhoma*<sup>114</sup> the concluding bath”; similarly KŚ. 19, 5, 11. As to this ritual act see also BhŚ. 3, 12, 1 f. and BhPar. 9 “the *adhvaryu* should offer a first (*samiṣṭayajus*) oblation and throw the *barhis* on the fire; alternatively, he should offer the oblation after having thrown the *barhis* on it”.

However, at the end of the *agnihotra* ritual, which is to be performed daily, the *barhis* should not be thrown into the fire: “Verily, this sacrifice is not concluded. If he should throw (the *barhis* into the fire), he would interrupt the sacrifice. Therefore, one should not throw (it into the fire) for the continuity (*samtatyaī*) of the sacrifice”. This instruction (TB. 2, 1, 4, 9) is followed in BhŚ. 6, 13, 12, but ĀpŚ. 6, 14, 4 mentions it as an alternative instead of the act described in 6, 14, 2 “he (takes) a blade of grass (from the *barhis*), anoints it in the pot containing the *agnihotra* milk (and) throws it into the fire”, a direction borrowed from KS. 6, 8: 58, 8, together with the mantra in which Agni is requested to give the speaker *cum suis* invigorating food. In MS. 1, 8, 7: 126, 8 ff.<sup>115</sup> those concerned are dissuaded from concluding the *agnihotra* by throwing that blade of grass into the fire, because this rite (being a lifelong obligation) can only be concluded when one meets such calamities as a premature death, loss of one’s property and so on. HŚ. 3, 7, 10 regards this rite as optional.

So a *barhis* may be used again. The *barhis* which is used at the *prāyaṇīya* (the introductory rite of the first day of a *soma* ceremony, corresponding to the *prayāja* of the sacrifice of full and new moon) is also employed at the *udayanīya* (the concluding rite), because the latter is in many respects a duplicate of the former (see e.g. BŚ. 8, 21: 262, 7; ĀpŚ. 13, 23, 1 ff.; KB. 7, 5 (7, 7, 1 ff.); 7, 7, (7, 8, 10 ff.))<sup>116</sup>. The authorities of the White Yajurveda, however, make (without a motivation) mention of both possibilities: the *barhis* may be kept or thrown into the fire (KŚ. 7, 5, 16; 19; ŚB. 3, 2, 3, 21 f.). From TS. 6, 1, 5, 5, stating that the fact that on the second occasion the scrapings of the rice-pap used at the *prāyaṇīya* should serve again marks the continuity of the sacrificial ritual, the motive for the double use of the *barhis* may be inferred also.

A passing reference may be made to ŚB. 3, 6, 3, 10 stating (without an explanation) that together with other objects the *barhis* that was used before at the guest-offering of a *soma* ceremony is taken up and conveyed to the north of the *āhavanīya* where it is sprinkled and spread in a single layer. That means that it is used again<sup>117</sup>.

After the *barhis* has, at the end of the full and new moon sacrifices, been thrown into the fire the author of MŚ. 1, 3, 5, 26 has the *vedi* covered with (blades of grass) taken from the seat of the *hotar* and recite the stanza KS. 31, 14: 16, 14 “strew the *barhis*, surround the *vedi*; do not harm the relative (read *jāmin*, viz. the *barhis* that has been thrown into the fire) that is lying along; strew (it) with green golden (KS., well-leaved MŚ.) blades of *darbha*, for these must be (KS.) the golden ornaments

114. Incorrectly Monier-Williams, s.v. “an oblation (prepared) for the sacrificial grass”.

115. See Caland, Śraut, Āpast. I, p. 193.

116. I refer to Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. 405 f.

117. See also ĀpŚ. 11, 17, 1; 11, 18, 11; 11, 19, 2 (BhŚ. 12, 18, 15) and for the other relevant texts R.N. Dandekar, Śrautakośa, II, English section, Agniṣṭoma, I, Poona 1973, p. 312 ff.



(*niṣkāḥ*) of the patron". It would appear that this act is to suggest that the sacrificer, who is intended to be born in the heavenly world (ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 12; cf. 11, 2, 2, 5; 13, 2, 2, 16), is, following the oblations, about to go heavenward. In the preceding mantra with which the *barhis* is thrown into the fire the ornament is said to have been spread in heaven. Compare also mantras such as TS. 1, 6, 6, 1 a; ĀpŚ. 4, 14, 11 "we have come to heaven ..." and TB. 3, 7, 6, 5 h addressed to the *barhis*: "place me, the sacrificer, in the heavenly world ..." This passage reminds us to a certain extent of a similar custom in Roman antiquity, described by several poets: an improvised altar had to be consecrated by the imposition of green sods. See Servius, on Verg. Aen. 12, 219: "Romani enim moris fuerat caespitem arae superimponere et ita sacrificare"<sup>118</sup>. Says Virgil, Aen. 3, 302 ff.: "In a wood near her city ... Andromache was calling up Hector's spirit at his empty barrow which she had, together with a pair of altars, consecrated by means of green turf (*viridi caespite*)"; Ovidius, Met. 15, 573 ff. speaks of altars full of grass (*herbosas*), made of green turf, and at Tristia 5, 5, 9 of a green altar to be made of a grass-sod (*gramineo caespite*). Horace was well aware of the fact that a living (*vivus*) sod was required (Od. 1, 19, 13) and he added a reference to *verbenae* ("herbage", also 4, 11, 6 f.) which in this connexion are also mentioned by other poets.

When at the time of the after-offerings the cord used for fastening the fuel together is thrown on the *āhavanīya* fire, the sacrificer should, according to BhŚ. 4, 17, 3 and ĀpŚ. 4, 11, 6, recite the mantra TB. 3, 7, 6, 18 dd "let the *vedi*, the *barhis*, the cooked oblation ... and the favourable disposition (of all these objects) bow to me ...". This is a *captatio benevolentiae*; these objects should resign themselves to the inevitable and remain well disposed towards the sacrificer.

118. For more particulars see Wagenvoort, Roman dynamism, p. 28.

## E. RITUALISTIC THEORY, EFFECTS, EXPLANATIONS, SPECIAL CASES, IDENTIFICATIONS

Sometimes the way in which the *barhis* grass is handled depends on the character of the rite or of the deity worshipped. In a section that describes the offerings made in the houses of the dignitaries of a king who is being consecrated<sup>1</sup> it is stated that for the sacrifice for Mitra and Bṛhaspati which takes place on the next day only half of the *vedi* is made, the other half is "self-made", i.e. natural, and that those concerned cut half of the *barhis* grass, whereas the other half is self-cut or self-torn (*svayamdinam*, KS. 15, 5: 212, 11; see also ĀpŚ. 18, 11, 10, stating that the latter half is tied). One should know that what is self-made or self-produced belongs to Mitra (cf. ŚB. 5, 3, 2, 5 ff.), what is made or prepared by man to another god (*in casu* Bṛhaspati), "for Mitra injures no one nor does any one injure Mitra" (ŚB. § 7). Compare also TS. 1, 8, 9, 3; TB. 1, 7, 3, 8; BŚ. 12, 6.

In a special sacrifice performed for a malevolent purpose, viz. injuring an enemy<sup>2</sup> by producing a rival or enemy in his own abode or sphere one should on the ground of that person (ĀpŚ. 19, 9, 9 f.) select a *vedi* and dig it up half, and half not, spread the *barhis* half, and half not, pile on half the kindling-wood and half not, and offer an oblation to Soma and Rudra – the former must no doubt be propitiated because a *brahman* is to be injured, the latter must be persuaded to actualize the injury (see TS. 2, 2, 10, 5; KS. 11, 5: 150, 11 prescribing a *barhis* consisting half of reeds (*śara*)<sup>3</sup>, half of *darbha*; MS. 2, 1, 6: 7, 17 a *barhis* half of reeds, half not; BŚ. 13, 18: 130, 4; MS. 5, 1, 6, 15 ff.).

Occasionally, specific power is explicitly assigned to the *barhis* which then is regarded as its bearer or possessor from whom it emanates. In a chapter on rites of atonement (*prāyaścitta*), the author of ĀpŚ. 9, 17, 1 quotes the stanza KS. 35, 3: 53, 3 (TB. 2, 5, 5, 1) "this sacrifice must prosper through (with) cattle and horses; this *vedi* (must be) well provided with offspring and energetic men; this *barhis* must surpass the other *barhīṃsi*; all the gods must favour this sacrifice".

The *barhis* is expected to be able to place the patron in heaven. According to ĀpŚ. 4, 5, 5, the mantra TB. 3, 7, 6, 5 h "do thou (, O *barhis*,) place me, the sacrificer, in the heavenly world, at the summit of the firmament, the highest sky" is pronounced over the *barhis* when it is put down, along with the fuel, north of the *āhavanīya* (cf. ĀpŚ. 2, 3, 17). – In ŚB. 12, 8, 1, 2 dealing with the *sautrāmaṇi* and quoting VS. 19, 32 the *adhvaryu* is stated to cause to patron to prosper by means of the *barhis* and the sacrifice, placing him with the deities in heaven through the *surā*. Of all the requisites the *barhis* alone is mentioned in this connexion. – In stating the paradigmatic character of the sacrifices of full and new moon the author of AiB. 1, 1, 12 refers, with regard to other sacrifices, to "the same oblation, the same *barhis*".

1. I refer to J.C. Heesterman, The ancient Indian royal consecration, Thesis Utrecht, 's-Gravenhage 1957, p. 49 ff., and p. 59.
2. I refer to W. Caland, Altindische Zauberei (Wunschopfer), Amsterdam Acad. 1908, p. 30 f.; Gonda, Dual deities, p. 361 f.
3. *Śara* is not infrequently used in rites for malevolent purposes (Kauś. 36, 14: 47, 1).

Another function of the *barhis* is mentioned in ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 26: it appeases (*śam-*) the *vedi*, that means, it makes the *vedi* harmless and inoffensive, neutralizes the evil influences that may emanate from it, re-establishes a harmonious condition<sup>4</sup>. That is why one is dissuaded from touching the *vedi* (and the oblations) or removing something (*tṛṇa* etc., comm.) that has fallen on it from its surface before the *barhis* has been spread on it. Then one will be well off (*śreyān*); in the other case one will be badly off (*pāpīyān*). Before that moment the *vedi* is *aśanta*, comm.; the *barhis* appeases it (ŚBK. 2, 2, 3, 23). The reason why this advice should be followed is that the *vedi*, being a sacrificial ground, is sacred and powerful and should not be touched without precautions. The *barhis* covers it as a sort of insulator taking away the danger of touching. For a similar use of the grass see TS. 2, 6, 5, 6 "the sacrificer is rent (disordered) in that they smooth the *prastara* (with which he is identical, § 5); he throws *barhis* grass (probably one stalk of it, cf. ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 19) along after it for appeasement (*sāntyai*)". In ŚB., l.c., this act performed by the *adhvaryu* prevents him from throwing himself into the fire after the *prastara*.

The patron of a sacrifice for full or new moon should touch the remaining portion of the cake offered to Agni which the *adhvaryu* had placed on the *barhis* (BhŚ. 3, 3, 1) with a long prayer (4, 16, 2; ĀpŚ. 4, 10, 9; TB. 3, 7, 5, 7-10, p, q): "Let (my possessions) while I am giving not be diminished; let the rite which I am performing not fail ..., do thou cause the waters to swell, do thou (the sun) quicken the plants, protect the two-footed ones, help the four-footed ones, procure (us) rain ..."

When at a given moment the butter which remains in the *dhruvā* spoon has been poured into the *juhū*, the officiant ties a piece of gold with a blade of the *barhis* (viz. of the *vedi*, *darbha*, comm.), lays it (in the *juhū*) and offers (the butter), because he wishes to offer with "whole" (i.e. pure) milk, "for milk and gold are of the same origin" (cf. ŚB. 2, 1, 1, 5; 2, 3, 1, 15). No motive is given for the use of the grass, its purity being self-evident (ŚB. 3, 2, 4, 8, *soma* sacrifice). The piece of gold is put down with VS. 4, 17, in which it is declared to be Agni's *varcas*, i.e. luminous energy (§ 9), and the grass (now called *tṛṇa*) is loosened and thrown on the *barhis* (§ 14).

In a section that deals with the final bath of a *soma* ceremony, TS. 6, 6, 3, 2 it is stated that one makes offering over the *barhis* in order to give a firm foundation to the oblations (*āhulīnām pratiṣṭhīyai*); "verily also", it is added, he pours his offering into what has fire" (*agnivatī eva juhōti*). As has been observed elsewhere the *darbha* shoot has fire in it. Compare KS. 29, 3: 171, 5; ĀpŚ. 8, 7, 29.

At a given moment the *adhvaryu* who is performing the *pravargya* ritual has to smear six wood splinters with the curds that remain in the "supporting vessels" and offer them<sup>5</sup> (see, e.g., KŚ. 26, 6, 12 ff.; ŚB. 14, 2, 2, 32 ff.). However, this offering is not made with the fourth chip which is concealed inside the *barhis* on the south side of the *vedi* called *ātīthyabarhis* "the *barhis* proper for (receiving) guests" (comm.). With the words "hail to the Fathers who are seated on the *barhis* and drinking the *gharma*" (VS. 38, 15); while doing this the *adhvaryu* looks towards the north (and accordingly, not at the chip). ŚB., § 35 provides a mythological explanation: when

4. Cf., in general, D.J. Hoens, Śānti, Thesis Utrecht 1951; Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 286 ff.

5. See J.A.B. van Buitenen, The pravargya, Poona 1968, p. 116 f.

the sacrifice had its head cut off, its life-sap flowed away and went to the Fathers. It is them the *adhvaryu* thus pleases. And he does not look at it because the Fathers have passed away once for all<sup>6</sup>.

I now proceed to discuss the ‘identifications’ to which (the) *barhis* has given rise. From KS. 25, 5: 107, 20 it appears that the one who strews the *barhis* creates a firm foundation on the earth for his offspring, because the *vedi* “is” the earth, the *barhis* offspring.

Not infrequently, the homologation is based on a characteristic which the *barhis* and the other object etc. have in common. When the officiant has cut off the *barhis* he touches the stubble and asks the divine *barhis* to rise with a hundred shoots. Since *barhis* is homologous to offspring, he mutters this formula in order to bring about the procreation of offspring (TB. 3, 2, 2, 6). We moderns might however suppose the fact that the grass after having been cut is capable of growing again rapidly out of the stubble to have contributed much to the popularity of this ‘identification’.

The way in which the *barhis* is dealt with, placed etc. is far from meaningless and produces results, affecting the sacrificer or his interests, determining the form or function of physical phenomena and so on. One way of acting may have a double result, one in the individual sphere and one of a general character. The *barhis* is tied lest the offspring (of the sacrificer) should be scattered away (TB. 3, 2, 2, 7), and that is also why the limbs of the creatures are held together with tendons. It is placed not directly on the ground lest the embryos (of the patron’s children) should be born abortively (lit. should fall down, TB. 3, 2, 2, 9). It is placed above as it were, in order to obtain the heavenly world which is above (for the patron, *ibidem*).

In explaining the ritual significance of actions, measures or instructions, whether or not they are in themselves of practical importance, the ritualists do not hesitate to face the consequences of an ‘identification’. When the *barhis* that has been gathered is tied with a cord the formula TS. 1, 1, 2 m “(thou art) the cord of Indrāṇī” is pronounced. “Being tied Indrāṇī prospered” (TB. 3, 2, 2, 7). That is why the *barhis* is tied for prosperity and since the *barhis* is offspring, it is to prevent (the patron’s) offspring from being scattered away. – If the *barhis* should be put down in the wrong way, that is from east towards west, the patron would fail in the procreation of offspring (TB. 3, 2, 10, 3).

Because of the same “identity” one sets one’s offspring free from death by omitting the worship of the *barhis* in making the fore-offerings in a ceremony in honour of the Fathers (MŚ. 1, 10, 18: 158, 4; see also 4, 8, 5: 112, 15).

Arguments such as the following are based on two homologations. Sprinkling the *vedi* one mutters the formula TS. 1, 1, 11 b (= VS. 2, 1) “thou art the *vedi*. I sprinkle thee for the *barhis*”. The *barhis* represents the (patron’s) offspring and the *vedi* the earth. Thus he firmly establishes the (patron’s) offspring on the earth” (TB. 3, 3, 6, 2 f.).

Occasionally, the bearing of an identification in a passage needs clarification by

6. For the importance of visual contact see Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 75 f.

means of a complicated argument. “Sprinkling the *barhis* he takes it: (thus) he places semen in the bulls” (KS. 36, 4: 71, 17; see also MS. 1, 10, 9: 149, 13). This process is explained as follows: “the *barhis* is offspring (*prajāh*), the scum of curdled milk semen (*vājinam* see also ŚB. 2, 4, 4, 21); (thus) he places semen in the offspring; he worships while being seated and raising his knees; cattle – said to be *vājinah* “bearers of the (re)creative power *vāja*” – has raised knees; (consequently) he places semen in cattle”.

Those who perform the *vaiśvadeva* should tie together three bunches of sacrificial grass (*barhis*) with one band (KŚ. 5, 1, 25), “for”, ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 18 observes, “such is the (characteristic) form of procreation, because father and mother are a productive (pair), and what is born forms a third (element); hence that which is three-fold is again (made) one”. By giving it the form of this material triunity one achieves an important purpose: such a *barhis* suggests the idea of productivity or continuity<sup>7</sup>. This is in harmony with the character of the *vaiśvadeva* sacrifice, (the first of the seasonal sacrifices) which is performed at the beginning of spring (cf. ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 7 “he who is desirous of offspring worships with this oblation” and the references to a productive union in § 9 and 11). See also KŚ. 5, 11, 3; MŚ. 5, 1, 3, 23. Another homologation of the triple (*trivṛt*) *barhis* to “father, mother and son” but with a different clearly stated effect is mentioned in TB. 1, 6, 3, 1: “There are three worlds: he (the sacrificer) has a firm foundation in these worlds; it is, on the other hand, bound together in one (bunch); this world (the earth) is one: that is why he has a firm foundation in this world”.

The identification (equation) is sometimes based on resemblance or on a certain similarity in outward appearance.

Because of the ‘identity’ of the *barhis* with hair a place such as TS. 6, 2, 11, 3 becomes intelligible. In this section the sounding-holes (*uparavāh*)<sup>8</sup> used at a *soma* ceremony are homologized to the vital organs (*prāṇāh*). The different stages of their preparation, which are minutely described, produce corresponding effects with regard to the *prāṇāh*, e.g. “he connects them (below) by means of a perforation; therefore the *prāṇāh* are united within (in this way) ...; he spreads over the *barhis*; therefore (the openings of) the *prāṇāh* are hairy within”. By spreading *barhūṃsī* (*darbhah*, Mahīdhara on VS. 5, 25 which is quoted) one places (bestows) the hair which there is at (the openings of) the vital organs (ŚB. 3, 5, 4, 20, in a section on the sounding-holes). In another discussion of the preparation of the sounding-holes it reads (ŚB. 3, 5, 4, 20 f. quoting VS. 5, 25): “Thereupon he spreads *barhis* grasses (*barhūṃsī*); he thereby places (bestows) the hair which there is at (the openings of) the organs of vitality or sensation (*prāṇāh*); that is why there is that hair at (the openings of) these organs ... He spreads it with “I spread you, Viṣṇu’s own”. He covers the bodies on the top, for the *barhūṃsī* are indeed the hair of his (Viṣṇu’s) head”. See also ŚB. 3, 5, 4, 21. For the *barhis* and hair on the body see also TĀ. 10, 64, 1, “Inasmuch as he spreads a cover of *barhis*, therefore creatures here are born with hair

7. I refer to my Triads in the Veda, p. 14; 42; for the third representing or bringing about continuity see, e.g., also TS. 5, 6, 8, 5.

8. See Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. 100 ff.



(on their bodies)” (ŚB. 11, 4, 1, 14): the usual explanation of mundane or physical phenomena as results of ritual performances. Likewise, GB. 1, 3, 9 “because he first spreads the *barhis* in front of the *vedi* therefore these creatures are born with hair (*lomaśaḥ*) first on the head”.

In VS. 19, 90; MS. 3, 11, 9: 154, 7; KS. 38, 3: 104, 4; TB. 2, 6, 4, 5 k Sarasvatī is said to have produced by means of jujube fruits the hairs in the nose of Indra like *barhis*, a translation (Dumont) which is to be preferred to “nose hairs” (Griffith). In the same context (VS. st. 91; MS. 1. 9; KS. 1. 6: TB. ibid. 1) the bull (which is sacred to Indra) (became) the god’s bodily form, “hairs were produced on his eyebrows like barley (and) *barhis*”.

In a discussion of the covering of the *vedi* the *prastara* is ‘identified’ with the tuft of hair on the head (the top-knot, *ūrdhvabaddhaḥ keśasaṃghātātmakaḥ stupāḥ*, ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 7) “and the hairs that there are below that (top-knot, viz. the beard etc.) that is for this (sacrifice) the other (sacrificial grass, viz.) the *barhis*; these (hairs) he thereby puts on it, and that is why he spreads the *barhis*”. In the following paragraph the *vedi* – the word is feminine – is said to be a woman; because the gods and priests who are experts in the ritual practice sit around her, one covers her nudity (*anagnām karoti*): hence it is in order to avoid nudity (on the part of the *vedi*) that he spreads the *barhis*<sup>9</sup>. In 1, 3, 4, 10 two stalks of grass (*tṛṇe* taken from the *barhis*, comm.) are laid down across the *barhis* with VS. 2, 5 “ye are Savitar’s arms; “he now lays down these crosswise as its (the sacrificer’s) eye-brows” (“they are indeed placed between the top-knot and the beard etc.”, comm.).

After stating that Prajāpati created woman in order to provide man with a firm basis with a view to procreation the author of BĀU. 6, 4, 3 ‘identifies’ her lap with the *vedi*, her (pubic) hair with the *barhis*; adding *striyam adha upāsīta* which does not only mean “one should revere woman below” (Hume and others) but also “one should draw near her below”. As Sāyaṇa rightly observes, the pressing stone (*grāvan*) which the creator god “stretched out of (not “for”) himself stands in this context for the penis erectus.

ChU. 5, 18 dealing with the Universal Self, that is with the Self that has assumed the shape of the whole universe, states that the constituent parts of its body “are” or correspond with objects and phenomena in the material world: its feet are the earth, its chest the *vedi*, the hairs on its body the *barhis* etc. The sacrificial ground and its characteristic features occupied the mind of these authors to such a degree that they were thought to serve as the model for physical processes.

The one who performs the *agnihotra* should at a given moment wipe off the fat that sticks to his finger on the *barhis* with the formula “to the (useful) plants thee, give life to the plants (*oṣadhīr jīva*)” (BŚ. 3, 6: 75, 9; BhŚ. 6, 12, 8; ĀpŚ. 6, 10, 11). See TB. 2, 1, 4, 7 “that he wipes off (the fat), that is meant for the plants”. According to Vait. 7, 14 one has to pronounce the formula “I gratify the plants and the trees”; cf. also GB. 1, 3, 12: 79, 9 stating that the person concerned has called upon the plants and trees, and see KŚ. 4, 14, 19 f. (using the term *kūrca* in-

9. On nudity see also P. Thieme, in Kuhn’s Zs. 78 (1963), p. 170 ff.; V. Pisani, in Münchener Stud. z. Sprachw. 25 (1969), p. 95.

stead of *barhis*). For the effect produced by this mantra in another context see TS. 3, 5, 2, 4.

In that during the fore-offerings one worships the *barhis*, one actually worships the plants; in that during the after-offerings one worships the *barhis*, one worships the fruit (MS. 1, 10, 9: 149, 3; KS. 36, 3: 71, 3, adding that if one worships a *barhis* of plants that grow near water, one worships that which grows under the fruit).

The one who enters on a fast should eat what grows in the forest, because cultivated plants, being the essence of the sacrificial cake, are due to the gods and complete abstention from food means consecration to the Fathers; eating uncultivated (*āraṇya*) plants means eating the essence of the *barhis*, just as eating something of trees means eating the essence of the fuel for the ritual fire, and so on (ŚB. 11, 1, 7, 1 f.).

The *barhis* "is", that is, is indeed homogeneous to or represents the useful plants (MS. 1, 8, 7: 126, 13 *oṣadhayo barhiḥ*<sup>10</sup>), the *vedi* representing the earth. Since the earth is as large as the *vedi* and the *barhis* represents the plants, the one who spreads the *barhis* places plants on the earth so that these plants are firmly established on the earth; "that is why one spreads the *barhis*" (ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 9). – In this connexion attention may be drawn to the double identification in ŚB. 1, 8, 2, 11; 1, 9, 2, 29: the *barhis* is this world (*loka*) and the plants; the one who worships (offers up) the *barhis* places plants on this world etc.

Elsewhere the *barhis* is indeed 'identified' with this world. In explanation of the use of the mantra "sit as *hotar* on the *barhis*" addressed to Agni the *hotar* is at ŚB. 1, 4, 1, 24 declared to be Agni and the *barhis* this world. "Hence he thereby establishes Agni (i.e. the fire) in this world, as this fire is placed (*hitah*, but this word means also "beneficial, favourable") in this world. This (mantra) is recited with reference to this world; and he for whom they, knowing this, recite it conquers this world by means of it". The cord with which the *barhis* that has been gathered is tied is addressed; "Thou art the girdle of Aditi" and TB. 3, 2, 2, 7 adds in explanation: "Aditi is this (earth)".

From AiB. 2, 6, 11 and the commentary it appears that one of the two blades of grass with which the victim has been brought near and dedicated (cf. ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 5) is thrown under it (cf. ĀpŚ. 7, 15, 8) in order to make it have its complete body (*sarvātman*). "The victim has plants as its body" (*oṣadhyātma*, text), "because it has digested the plants which it has eaten" (comm.). The mantra is to make it have all plants as its body (comm.). Interestingly, in BhŚ. 7, 13, 1 the mantra TS. 1, 3, 9 k begins with "be united with the body (of the victim); being uncommonly high (or great, *varṣīyas*) place the lord (patron of the sacrifice) is an uncommonly high (or great) sacrifice; guard (the victim) from contact with the earth".

Basing their arguments upon homologations and other relations between facts, entities, phenomena and deities or processes the ritualists bring reasons for the importance of almost any detail: "What has roots belongs to the Fathers: the *barhis*

10. See also KapS. 4, 5: 43, 11; ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 9; AiB. 5, 28, 1; TB. 2, 1, 5, 1 (the comm. explaining "rice etc."), and TĀ. 3, 8, 1 (enumerating the *sambhāraṇyajūṣi*) *oṣadhayo barhiḥ* (sc. *āgacchanti*, comm.), just as the Waters with the water for sprinkling (cf. AiB. 5, 28, 1).

has roots in order to establish a distinction. He spreads it southward, for what is turned towards the south belongs to the Fathers. He circumambulates three times: the Fathers are in the third "world" (*loka*) from this world; them he gratifies. He circumambulates again three times: that amounts to six. There are six seasons. It is the seasons he gratifies ..." (TB. 1, 6, 8, 7 f.).

A double identification enables an author to arrive at a somewhat far-fetched conclusion: "He offers to the *barhis* (which is a deity). The *barhis* indeed is (represents) this world; the *barhis* is (represents) the plants; hence he thereby bestows plants on this world and these plants are firmly established in this world" (ŚB. 1, 8, 2, 11; 1, 9, 2, 29).

In TB. 2, 8, 2, 2 the sons of Aditi (the gods) are invited to sit down on her lap (*upastha*, cf. RV. 7, 88, 7; 9, 74, 5; 10, 70, 7 and 7, 43, 3), i.e. the *barhis*, in order to eat the oblation. This stanza, one of the mantras belonging to the animal sacrifices for interested purposes, is, according to Sāyaṇa, to be recited as invitation to one of the oblations. It is followed by "sit down on the spread *barhis*, at this sacrifice, keeping away ... Inattention (*amati*); bestow on us (your gifts)". Compare ŚB. 8, 2, 1, 10 (VS. 14, 5): the back of Aditi is the earth; 3, 2, 3, 19.

Or the *barhis* is associated with something else because of some fact or phenomenon that is characteristic of that thing, being, concept etc. Discussing the fore-offerings the author of KB. 3, 4 (3, 4, 12 ff.) states that they are (represent, are homologous to) the seasons. By worshipping the *barhis* one gratifies the autumn, because in the autumn the plants are strongest (highest, *barhiṣṭhāḥ*)<sup>11</sup>. According to ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 12 the *barhis* "is" the autumn, inasmuch as the plants which have grown by the rains lie spread open in autumn like a *barhis*. According to KS. 25, 4, 106, 17; KapS. 39, 1: 212, 11 the (useful) plants which have disappeared in the cool season because people root up the (sacrificial) grass continue their existence in spring thanks to the *barhis* that is spread. In AiB. 2, 4, 8 the *barhis* is 'identified' with cattle (no doubt because grass is their food); by worshipping it the officiant gratifies cattle and confers cattle on the patron. The same 'identification' occurs in ŚB. 12, 9, 1, 11 where the *sautrāmaṇī* is declared to be a complete body (person, *ātmā*), the sacrificer "mind" (*manas*) that manifests itself as speech (*vāc*), the *vedī* the trunk (*ātmā*), the *uttaravedī* offspring, the *barhis* cattle, the officiants the limbs, the fuel the bones, the ghee the marrow, the fire the mouth, the concluding rite bodily and mental health (vigorous age, *vayas*). Most of these equations are sufficiently clear, but it is worth noticing that two of the main objects of the sacrificer's desire, offspring and cattle, are somewhat inconsistently represented by the *uttaravedī*; which is elsewhere 'identified' with the sky (ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 27), etc., and the *barhis*. In 12, 8, 2, 36 identifying the *sautrāmaṇī* and its elements etc. otherwise, the *vedī* is the earth, the *uttaravedī* the intermediate space, the *barhis* the sky; while the relation between *vedī* and *barhis* is clearly expressed by earth and sky (cf. TB. 3, 2, 2, 9), the *uttaravedī* is more or less from necessity made to fill the place between them. —

11. The author has no doubt chosen this word because of its resemblance to *barhis* with which it is not related etymologically. A.B. Keith's translation, Rigveda brāhmanas, Cambridge Mass. 1920, p. 360, is incorrect.

As to the *barhis* and cattle attention may also be drawn to KS. 26, 7: 130, 15: "One *vajra* ("thunderbolt"), viz. the dry one is dreadful, the other, viz. the wet one, is friendly. He drives (the animal) near with the friendly one. He drives (in fact) near with the *barhis*. One should know that the *barhis* is cattle. With cattle he drives for him cattle". The animal victim is placed on a *barhis* (one stalk of grass) because a domestic or sacrificial animal has plants for its body (person, *oṣadhyāt mā vai paśuḥ*: it eats plants, comm., AiB. 2, 6, 11).

The equations are not mutually exclusive. In the section on the tenth day of a *soma* sacrifice AiB. 5, 26, 3 ff. the offering spoon is declared to be *citti* "taking notice", the ghee *citta* ("reflection, thought"), the *vedi vāc* (speech), the *barhis adhītam* ("what has been learned or studied", *uccāryamāṇam* "pronounced", comm. on AiĀ. 3, 1) and Agni *keta* ("the knowledge of or insight into the indicia"). This seems to be a consistent series of phases of the process of acquiring knowledge, in which speech, i.e. recitation for the purpose of memorizing, is an indispensable stage that results in learning. See also MS. 1, 9, 1: 131, 1; 1, 9, 3: 132, 9; KS. 9, 8: 110, 12; 9, 11: 112, 11.

The *barhis* is one of those elements of a sacrificial performance which are ritually worshipped and given an oblation. At a sacrifice of full or new moon and similarly at all unbloody sacrifices of that type (MŚ. 5, 1, 2, 6; ĀśvŚ. 1, 5, 1, ff.) there are five preliminary oblations of butter, the so-called fore-offerings (*prayāja*) to be made before the principal offerings (BŚ. 1, 16: 24, 7 ff.; BhŚ. 2, 16, 5 ff.; ĀpŚ. 2, 17, 1 ff.; KŚ. 3, 2, 16 ff.)<sup>12</sup>. They are addressed to the *samidhs*, the logs of firewood, which are a matter of primary importance and are referred to in the first stanzas of the ṛgvedic *āprī* hymns<sup>13</sup>; Tanūnapāt (Agni as the divine embryo) or, in some cases (ŚŚ. 1, 7, 3) Narāśaṃsa (another form of Agni, likewise occurring in the *āprī* hymns); the *ids* (in the *āprī* hymns the invigorating sacrificial food as objects of devotion referred to in the next stanza, in the brāhmaṇas explained as "the praises"); the *barhis* (mentioned in the following stanza of the *āprī* hymns) – the *barhis* is invited to accept the butter offering (e.g. TB. 2, 5, 5, 1; 3, 6, 2, 1) – and the *svāhā* call (an exclamation used in making an oblation to the gods, mentioned in the last stanza of the *āprī* hymns RV. 1, 13 etc.). This order is fixed<sup>14</sup>. In the case of an animal sacrifice there are eleven addressees (as in the *āprī* hymns; see BhŚ. 7, 11, 7 ff.; ĀpŚ. 7, 14, 6 ff.; MŚ. 1, 8, 3, 15 ff.; ŚB. 3, 8, 1, 3), in that of the seasonal sacrifices nine (which again correspond with the deities of the *āprī* hymns, MŚ. 1, 7, 2, 2; 5, 1, 3, 6; TB. 1, 6, 3, 3; BhŚ. 8, 2, 22; ĀpŚ. 8, 2, 14).

According to ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 1 the fore-offerings are (homologous to) the seasons and that is why they are five in number. By worshipping with them the patron, following the example of the gods, wins the seasons, the year (*ibidem*, 3). By means of the worship of the logs of wood he wins the spring, etc., by means of the *barhis* the autumn: "the *barhis* is the autumn, because then the plants have grown by the rains

12. For particulars see also Hillebrandt, Neu- und Vollmondsopfer, p. 94 ff.

13. See Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 71 f. As to the *āprī* hymns see Gonda, Vedic literature, p. 104.

14. For the mantras see TB. 3, 5, 5, 1.

and lie spread open like the *barhis*" (12). However, this act produces a second effect. The *barhis* represents offspring and the butter – with which the empty spoon is on this occasion to be replenished – semen: "hence seed is thereby infused into the descendants so that they are generated again and again", and for this reason he pours the butter on this occasion (16). A similar passage occurs in TS. 2, 6, 1, 1 ff.: the one who honours the *barhis* with a sacrifice wins the autumn and offspring; moreover, the oblation (of butter) is fiery energy (*tejas*); by offering it to the *barhis* one places *tejas* in (the patron's) offspring" (2). By the same act one establishes oneself firmly (*prati liṣṭhati*) on the paths that lead to the gods (3). "He who knows the pairing of the fore-offerings propagates himself with offspring, cattle (and) pairings ... He honours the *ids* as many, the *barhis* as one. That is a pair (4, *mithunam*, notice that the word *id* is feminine and *barhis* sometimes is masculine). "In that the fore- and after-offerings are made protection is afforded to the sacrifice and to the sacrificer" (5).

Sometimes, however, the fore-offering to the *barhis* is omitted. The sacrifice to the Fathers (*mahāpitryajña*) which belongs to the *sākamedha* ritual<sup>15</sup> requires only four *prayājas*, not that to the *barhis*, "lest one should consign one's offspring to the Fathers" (ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 23 and 44; cf. also MŚ. 1, 7, 6, 26; 5, 1, 4, 15; KŚ. 5, 8, 39). In KB. 5, 7 (5, 8, 26) this omission (see ĀśvŚ. 2, 19, 12; ŚŚ. 3, 16, 24; 3, 17, 7) is motivated as follows: "the *barhis* is offspring, (he thinks) "let me not cast offspring in the fire"" (see also ĀśvŚ. 6, 13, 4). Other relevant places are KS. 29, 3: 171, 7; MS. 1, 10, 18: 158, 4; 4, 8, 5: 112, 15; TB. 1, 6, 9, 2 (cf. ĀpŚ. 8, 14, 23); 10. According to TB. 1, 6, 9, 2 one delivers the offspring from death by omitting this oblation in the *kaukili sautrāmaṇi*. The fourth *prayāja* is also omitted in the *avabhṛtheṣṭi*, the *iṣṭi* on the occasion of the concluding bath of a *soma* sacrifice<sup>16</sup> (KŚ. 10, 8, 23; 30; ŚB. 4, 4, 5, 14; 19; BŚ. 8, 19: 260, 12; ĀpŚ. 8, 8, 6; ŚŚ. 8, 11, 9). While according to the explanation found in KB. 18, 10 (18, 7, 14 ff.; cf. ŚŚ. 8, 11, 9; MŚ. 1, 7, 4, 39) this offering is omitted, because no grass is strewn here (on this occasion), TS. 6, 6, 3, 2 f. provides the following information: "the *barhis* is offspring; verily he frees offspring from Varuṇa's noose" (cf. ĀpŚ. 8, 8, 6): the bathing is to propitiate Varuṇa who is in the waters (§ 1); by means of the following oblation to this god the officiant frees the patron from the god's noose (3). See also ŚB. 4, 4, 5, 14: ... this bath belongs to Varuṇa: lest this god should seize his offspring<sup>17</sup>.

On the occasion of an *iṣṭi* the performance of the after-offerings (*anuyājas*<sup>18</sup>) requires three oblations, viz. one to the *barhis*, one to Narāsaṃsa, and one to Agni Sviṣṭakṛt ("who makes the offering well performed"): see KŚ. 3, 5, 5 ff.; BS. 3, 19: 28, 9; BhŚ. 3, 5, 1 ff.; ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 1 f.; ŚŚ. 1, 12, 13<sup>19</sup>. In explanation of the first *anuyāja* ŚB. 1, 8, 2, 11 observes: "The *barhis* is (represents) this world (cf. 1, 4, 1,

15. Cf. Gonda, *Religionen Indiens*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 146 f.; 163.

16. See Caland and Henry, *L'agniṣṭoma*, p. 398.

17. In performing the *varuṇapraghāsa* the *hotar* omits the offering formula for the *barhis* (MŚ. 5, 1, 3, 23).

18. See Hillebrandt, *Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, p. 134 ff.

19. At the seasonal sacrifices there are nine after-offerings (e.g. ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 20; 2, 5, 2, 41; 2, 5, 4, 2); at an animal sacrifice eleven (e.g. ŚB. 3, 8, 4, 1).



24)<sup>20</sup>; the *barhis* is the (useful) plants; hence he thereby bestows plants on this world, and these plants are firmly established (*pratiṣṭhīlāḥ*) in this world". Prescribing the mantras "by the worship of the *barhis* I would like to be possessed of children" (TS. 1, 6, 4, 1 a) TS. 1, 7, 4, 1 informs us that by means of the *barhis* Prajāpati created offspring. In explanation of a parallel mantra (1, 6, 41 b) this god is said to have created cattle. There is no after-offering on the occasions mentioned KŚ. 5, 8, 39 and 10, 8, 30 (see above, and cf. also ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 44). Other places are TS. 6, 6, 3, 3; ŚB. 4, 4, 5, 19; KB. 5, 7 (5, 8, 26 ff.); ŚŚ. 3, 17, 7.

The *barhis* of water-plants is in an oft-quoted formula declared to be divine (*devam*, VS. 21, 57<sup>21</sup>). Being a seat for Indra it is said to help this god and to cause his strength to increase. In one of the formulae belonging to the *sautrāmaṇī* ritual<sup>22</sup> the Āsvins and Sarasvatī are said to have spread it out for him, for his dominion, together with Manyu (Fury) and his characteristic power called *indriya*<sup>23</sup>. It is in the oft-quoted consecratory formula which the *hotar* recites for an after-offering to the *barhis* requested graciously to accept a share of the gift of wealth for the benefit of the one who wishes to acquire wealth (i.e. the sacrificer)<sup>24</sup>.

The sacrificer who has a soma ceremony performed should at the time of the after-offerings utter a number of prayers the first of which is "by divine worship of the god *barhis* may I be possessed of progeny" (BhŚ. 4, 17, 4; ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 1). TS. 1, 7, 4 and KS. 32, 3: 21, 1 refer in explanation to the mythical fact that Prajāpati created offspring by means of the *barhis*, and that (consequently by means of this offering and this mantra) the sacrificer creates progeny for himself.

When Sarasvatī and the Āsvins gave Indra his eyesight and psychical faculties they did this together with, or with the help of, the *barhis* which is explicitly said to be divine (*deva*, VS. 21, 48; TB. 2, 6, 14, 1 a etc.).

From the mantras prescribed in MS. 4, 13, 8; KS. 19, 13; TB. 3, 6, 13 a<sup>25</sup> we may perhaps draw some conclusions with regard to the social and economic significance attached to the spread sacrificial grass. The wish is expressed (MS. 209, 9; VS. 15, 15; TB. 1 a) that the *barhis* may be *sudevam devaiḥ* which may mean "most godly through the gods" (Dumont), but also "destined for the right gods through the gods", and *suviram viraiḥ* "most manly through men" (Dumont) or "rich in energetic men or offspring through men", that is "may men not prevent it from producing the result desired, viz. a safe and sound condition of men and offspring"<sup>26</sup>. The next prayer is "may we, through possessions, rejoice more than oth-

20. In § 12 Narāśansa is said to represent the intermediate space.

21. Also VS. 28, 21; 44; MS. 3, 11, 5: 148, 1; 4, 3, 8: 210, 18; 211, 2; KS. 19, 13: 16, 13; TB. 2, 6, 10, 6; 2, 6, 14, 5; 2, 6, 20, 5; 3, 6, 13, 1; 3, 6, 14, 2; ĀsvŚ. 3, 6, 13; ŚŚ. 5, 20, 4.

22. J. Gonda, The mantras of the agnyupasthāna and the sautrāmaṇī, Amsterdam Acad. 1980, p. 79 ff.

23. TB. 2, 6, 14, 5 etc.; see also 2, 6, 10, 1; 2, 6, 20, 1.

24. TB. (3, 5, 9, 1); 3, 6, 13, 1; 3, 6, 14, 2; ĀsvŚ. (1, 8, 7; 2, 8, 14); 3, 6, 13; ŚŚ. 5, 20, 4, etc. (Caland's translation is different).

25. Reference to which is also made in other sections of this chapter.

26. W. Caland, Śāṅkhāyana-Śrautasūtra, Nagpur 1953, p. 138 proposed the following interpretation: "the divine *barhis* may be connected with the gods through the gods, connected with men through men".

ers who have spread the *barhis*". That is why the *barhis* is as a divine being and in accordance with the principle *do ut des* in the following prayer besought to accept a share of the sacrificer's gift.

The *barhis* is further (MS. 211, 1; KS. 16, 14; TB. 1 j) said to be *pracyūlinām apracyutam*, that is the immovable support of those (beings and objects) that have lost their support (are deviating, suffer deprivation). Dumont<sup>27</sup> is probably right in supposing that this refers – I would add: in the first place – to the movable objects (vessels and implements) which are put on the *barhis* but the verb *pracyu-* and its derivatives ordinarily mean "to lose its support and fall down, to swerve or deviate from", so that the above general meaning seems to be implied. This would also be in harmony with the following epithets – "bearing or supporting according to wish" (*nikāmadharaṇam*), "jealously desired" (*puruspārham*) and "rich in honour" (*yaśasvat*) – and with the next prayer "may we overcome other *barhīmsī* (viz. those of other sacrificers, whether or not they are our enemies or rivals) through this *barhis*".

The worship of the *barhis* takes place without fire (TB. 3, 1, 3, 1)<sup>28</sup>.

However, in ŚB. 1, 8, 2, 15 it is argued that the *barhis* is no deity proper, because "in the formula "the divine *barhis*" there is no Agni, no Indra, no Soma".

27. Dumont, in Proc. Amer. Phil. Soc. 106, p. 262, n. 73.

28. On this passage see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 374.

## F. TERMINOLOGICAL AND ETYMOLOGICAL ADDENDA

Even a single stalk of grass may be called *barhis*, if it is strewn on a place where one runs the risk of spilling sacrificial material or if it is used as an underlayer. If such material falls on that *barhis*, it becomes firmly established on it (*pratitiṣṭhati*) and thus is not lost (ŚB. 3, 8, 1, 14; cf. KŚ. 6, 5, 15). When the animal victim is cut up, one throws down a *tṛṇa*, “one thus strews (a) *barhis* for it, that no sacrificial food may be spilt” (ŚB., 1.c.). See also AiB. 2, 6, 11, where *barhis* likewise refers to one stalk (cf. the comm.); ĀpŚ. 7, 15, 8; 7, 16, 4; BŚ. 25, 29: 262, 13; and AiB. 2, 11, 6 f.: when the victim is to be killed, the *adhvaryu* throws (*upāsyati*, the stereotype phrase) a *barhis* below it “on which they thereupon make it sit down” (*barhiṣadādam ... kurvanti*)<sup>1</sup>. An explanation is found in TS. 6, 3, 8, 2 “with ‘guard from contact with the earth’ he casts down the *barhis* that nothing may be lost ...”; see also TS. 1, 3, 8, 2 I; BhŚ. 7, 12, 16.

But the two blades of *darbha* with which the animal victim is brought near (dedicated) are also called *barhiṣī* (BhŚ. 7, 9, 8; 11; ĀpŚ. 7, 12, 8, the comm. uses *tṛṇa*); if there is more than one victim, one uses in each case other stalks (ĀpŚ. 14, 7, 4; 18, 2, 16; VaikhŚ. 17, 10: 242, 18 speaking, like BŚ. 2, 9: 48, 11 of *barhis* in the singular). See also ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 9; 12, 28, 5 (dual). VaikhG. 5, 13: 85, 6 mentions the strewing of sesame, *barhis* (plur., i.e. *darbha* blades) and *udumbara* leaves.

Occasionally the plural of the word *barhis* occurs in the general sense of blades of (*darbha*) grass that are (to be strewn: VaikhG. 5, 13: 85, 6 (dealing with a *śrāddha*) “then follows the strewing of sesame and of an uneven number of ... *darbha* blades (*barhiṣām*) and of *udumbara* leaves”<sup>2</sup>.

Dealing with the *soma* sacrifice called *abhijit*, which is characterized by the recitation of both sets of hymns, those connected with the *bṛhat* (*sāman*) and the *rathantara*, the author of KB. 24, 2 (24, 2, 10 ff.) quoting RV. 2, 41, 13–15 in which the Viśve Devāḥ are invited to sit down on the *barhis*, observes that the *barhis* is a manifestation or symbol of the *bṛhat* (*bārhatam*). Though etymologically incorrect, the similarity of the two words no doubt lent probability to the author’s argumentation.

Sometimes an etymological relation is supposed to exist between the most important word of the formula used and the circumstances under which it is, or is to be, pronounced. In TS. 6, 3, 6, 1 one takes up the *barhis* with *iṣe tvā* “for refreshment (I cut, take) thee” (TS. 1, 3, 7 a), “for he who worships with a sacrifice strives (endeavours to obtain, *icchate*) as it were”. The chapter deals with the driving up of the animal victim, the mantra being understood as “for (in order to promote my) endeavour”.

When Rudra, being excluded from the sacrifice, wished to revenge the insult he pierced the sacrifice; this became the *prāṣitra* (the portion of the oblation which, being left over, is eaten by the *brahman* priest). The gods kept it for Barhi Āngirasa,

1. In Mary Boyce, *A history of Zoroastrianism*, I, Leiden 1975, p. 167 quoting Keith’s translation (p. 143) of AiB. 2, 2, 11 read 2, 6, 11.

2. VaikhŚ. 11, 10: 130, 4 is not clear.

who assumed it with the result that his limbs and joints became loosened. The sacrifice however brought him into order. On that occasion the *barhis* was the ancient *prastara* (spreading): an etymological explanation of the origin of the *barhis* or its name by connecting it with a mythical personage (as to the story, compare TS. 2, 6, 8, 3; ŚB. 1, 7, 4, 5 ff.; KB. 6, 13 f. (6, 7, 6 ff.)).

## G. UTTARABARHIS

Mention of an “upper *barhis*” (*uttarabarhis*) is made in TS. 6, 2, 4, 5. Here the *vedi* is ‘identified’ with the earth, “but they measure off and sacrifice on so much as they deem they can use”, “Because in preparing the *vedi* one digs up the earth, the plants perish. But they revive when the *barhis* is spread. Then one spreads over (it) the upper *barhis*. The *barhis* “is” the people, the upper *barhis* the sacrificer. Thus the officiant makes the sacrificer higher than the man who does not sacrifice. Therefore the former is higher than the latter”. – Receiving the summons “*agnīdh*, place upon (the *barhis*) the *uttarabarhis*” and “*pratiprasthātar*, converse (with the butcher) about the victim” (cf. ĀpŚ. 13, 11, 1 and MŚ. 2, 5, 1, 23, where the first direction is “divide the fires, strew the *barhis* ...”) the former functionary covers a *plakṣa* branch with a rattan mat<sup>1</sup> – “that becomes the *uttarabarhis*” (BŚ. 4, 8: 122, 1). According to MS. 3, 10, 2: 132, 8 the *barhis* belongs to the *soma*, the *uttarabarhis* to the animal victim. The author of ŚB. 3, 8, 3, 10 dealing with the cutting and offering of the flesh-portions of the animal victim informs us that it is taken between the stake (*yūpa*) and that fire and then cut on an upper *barhis* (*uttarabarhis*) of *plakṣa* branches. After explaining the origin of this custom the text states that this *uttarabarhis* enables the officiant to complete the victim with its sacrificial essence (*medha*) which – according to the myth – had flowed down to become the *plakṣa*. According to TS. 6, 3, 10, 2 the officiant who cuts the flesh of the victim on the *uttarabarhis* cuts off from it while it has its *medha*. – Remarkably enough, an *uttarabarhis* is in VaikhG. 5, 2: 70, 12 one of the many sacrificial requisites which are collected with a view to performing an *agnihotra* when a householder has died.

1. *iḍasūna* (often in BŚ., e.g., 4, 1: 107, 5; explained *iḍā kudikā baidali, sūnā phalakā*) in ŚB. 13, 2, 2, 9 called *iḍasūna*, on which the portions of the flesh of the sacrificial horse are cut.



## Prastara

The only ṛgvedic occurrence of *prastara* (lit. “anything strewn or spread forth or about”) is found in the funeral hymn 10, 14, stanza 4 inviting the ruler of the deceased (Yama) “to sit down upon this *prastara* uniting himself with the Aṅgīrases, the Fathers”, being brought hither by the mantras of the seers and politely requested (“O king”) to rejoice in the oblation offered. We cannot of course say, whether or not this “spread distinctive characteristic of sacrificial worship” (Sāyaṇa) was laid down according to the rules of the later sūtra works. This stanza is also found as AVŚ. 18, 1, 60, where Whitney inaptly translated “cushion” – Kauś. 84, 2 uses it with an oblation to Yama on the occasion of the interment of the bones –; in AiB. 3, 37, 10 as one of the stanzas of the *āgnimāruta śastra* of the *hotar* at the evening pressing of a soma sacrifice (see also ĀśvŚ. 5, 20, 6; ŚŚ. 8, 6, 13)<sup>1</sup>, in ĀśvŚ. 2, 19, 22 it is one of the stanzas recited by the *hotar* at the sacrifice to the Fathers that belongs to the *sākamedha*; as TS. 2, 6, 12, 6 p it is an invitatory stanza recited at the sacrifice to the Fathers that belongs to the ritual of full and new moon; also MS. 4, 14, 16: 243, 2.

The stanza AVŚ. 16, 2, 6 “thou art the *prastara* of the *ṛṣīs*, homage be to the *prastara* of the divine ones (*daīvya*)” is in Vait. 2, 9 prescribed to accompany the placing of the *prastara* in a *śrauta* sacrifice (cf., e.g., ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 13)<sup>2</sup>. The use of another mantra is not surprising because the Vaitāna is not an ordinary *śrautasūtra* for the use of Atharvavedins, but a manual for the *brahman* and his assistants as well as the sacrificer, if he is an Atharvavedin<sup>3</sup>. The stanza is also used in Kauś. 2, 18 to accompany the taking up of part of the *darbha* provided for a sacrifice of full or new moon (which constitute the frame in which the magical rites are inserted) and making a seat for the *brahman*; and for the same reason at 137, 33 in the ritual called *ājyatantra*. If the stanza was specially composed for this purpose the references to seers and divinity may be regarded as honorific.

The *prastara*<sup>4</sup> is an important feature of various *śrauta* rituals, in the first place of the sacrifices of full and new moon (*darśapūrṇamāsau*) and of all sacrificial ceremo-

1. Caland and Henry, L’agniṣṭoma, p. 372 ff.

2. See below, p. 202.

3. Cf. J. Gonda, The ritual sūtras, Wiesbaden 1977, p. 543 f.

4. For the occurrence of the term at the beginning of an enumeration of requisites see BŚ. 28, 13: 366, 7.

nies of which these are the model, viz. the so-called *iṣṭis*, which require oblations of vegetable and the co-operation of four officiants (*hotar*, *adhvaryu*, *āgnīdhra* and *brahman*).

When the *adhvaryu* has, at the beginning of the sacrifice, fetched the grass of any place which he has cut (the *barhis* consisting of *darbha*, *darbhamayaṃ barhiḥ*) (BhŚ. 1, 3, 7), he should cut a handful of it of such a size that it can be grasped between the nails of the thumb and the fore-finger (*saṃnakham*, the only measure mentioned in VaikhŚ. 3, 4: 35, 1), or according to others, of the size of a cow's tail, a thigh-bone, a handle of a ladle, or unmeasured; this is the *prastara* (1, 3, 13 ff.). ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 15 ff., not mentioning the last opinion, states the same measures, adding an elbow (*aratni*, probably its width), a short span, (the width of) the shin-bone, measures which, no doubt used in daily practice, were always available. In any case, the *prastara* should be of limited size. BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 12 only says that he takes hold of (*parigṛhṇāti*) a bunch of *darbha* of the size he deems sufficient for a *prastara* with "thou art grasped (*pariṣūlam*) together by the gods" (TS. 1, 1, 2, 1 d), which BhŚ. 1, 3, 9 and ĀpŚ. 1, 3, 6 (and VaikhŚ.) is prescribed at an earlier moment, viz. when the grass is cut. According to TB. 3, 2, 2, 3 f. he utters this mantra lest he should injure himself; he announces this act to the gods who grasp whatever there is (in this world)<sup>5</sup>. According to MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 29 the *adhvaryu* grasps (gathers, *pariṣvati*) the *darbha* for the *prastara* with this mantra which VārŚ. prescribes at an earlier moment, stating (1, 2, 1, 17) that the grass which has been cut first should be made the *prastara* (*saṃnakham*). Having done as stated above the *adhvaryu* should touch the bundle with "thou art the hair-knot of Viṣṇu", and let loose some of the blades; the remainder is for the *prastara* (32); he cuts off a handful of branching (forked, *viśākha*<sup>6</sup>, which suggests propagation) blades *saṃnakham*<sup>7</sup>.

Thereupon the *adhvaryu* lays a *trṇa* (on the ground) and places the *prastara* on it (MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 35; VārŚ. 1, 2, 1, 17; see also BŚ. 1, 2: 2, 18; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 1) with TS. 1, 1, 2 k "protect (it) from contact with the earth". The next duty to be performed is the cutting of an odd number of handfuls of grass (without a mantra BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 1; BhŚ. 1, 3, 19; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 2), (with which the *vedi* is to be strewn)<sup>8</sup>. "According to some authorities the *prastara* should make the number of the handfuls even, according to others (among them ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 4), odd" (BhŚ. 21; cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 5). See TB. 3, 2, 2, 6 quoted elsewhere. The handfuls are put together so as to form bundles, which should be odd in number (*nidhanāni* ĀpŚ. 3; cf. BhŚ. 22). Then (he grasps) the *prastara* with "unobstructed is the womb" (MŚ. 1, 1, 1, 43; MS. 1, 1, 2: 2, 2, which in VārŚ. 1, 1, 1, 22 and ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 11 are used otherwise<sup>9</sup>).

Without dwelling on the cutting of the grass the texts of the White Yajurveda state that the bundle of *barhis* (KŚ. 2, 7, 21; see also ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 5)<sup>10</sup> is untied and

5. For other particulars and the mantras see ch. X.

6. On *viśākha* see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 37.

7. Cf. also MS. 4, 1, 2.

8. See ch. X.

9. See ch. X.

10. See also Hillebrandt, Neu- und Vollmondsopfer, p. 64.

the *prastara* is taken from the eastern side (of the *barhis*) with “thou art the hair-knot (crest, *stupa*) of Viṣṇu” (see above; VS. 2, 2). ŚB. explains: “Viṣṇu is the sacrifice, and this is his *śikhā*, i.e. the tuft of hair on the crown of his head, (or) *stupa*; he (the officiant) makes it thereby this at this (sacrifice). From the eastern (front) side he takes it, because this *stupa* also is (worn) on the front (of the head)”. Sāyaṇa reminds us of the fact that the *prastara* lies on the eastern side of the *vedi*. He then hands the *prastara* to the *brahman*, unfolds the cord – “the sacrificer’s wife is sure to bring forth easily (*prakṣiptam*”<sup>11</sup>), ŚB. 6) – puts it down on the right (south) hip of the *vedi* – “for this represents the sacrificer’s waist-band, which is tied on the right side” – and covers it (with other blades of grass) “because the waist-band is covered (by the upper garment, comm. KŚ.)” (KŚ. 22). The other *barhis* grass represents the hair that is under the top-knot (the beard etc., ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 7) which is therefore to be laid over the other grass on the *vedi*.

When the sacrificial grass (*barhis*) has been loosened (BŚ. 1, 13: 19, 21; BhŚ. 2, 8, 4; ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 3), the *adhvaryu*, according to the tradition of the Taittirīyas, takes the *prastara* with “thou art the hair-knot of Viṣṇu” (see above) first (*purastāt* (B.; Bh. 6). These sūtra texts follow TS. 2, 6, 5, 2 and TB. 3, 3, 6, 6 (*purastāt prastaram grhṇāti*)<sup>12</sup>. By doing thus he makes him<sup>13</sup> (the sacrificer, who is ‘identical’ with the *prastara*) the first (the chief, *mukhyam*, TS. TB., also KS. 31, 10: 12, 12; and being at the head, MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 13). See also MS. 3, 8, 6: 102, 4; and KS. 25, 5: 108, 2; KapS. 39, 2: 214, 1: “The *prastara* is the *yajamāna*, the *barhis* the *prajāh*. In that he places the *prastara* higher than the *barhis* he (the *adhvaryu*) thereby makes the patron of the sacrifice higher than these subjects”. The *adhvaryu* takes it (the *prastara*) of such a size that it is equal to Prajāpati, the mouth – i.e. the beginning (or introduction) – of the sacrifice (cf. TB. 1, 7, 1, 4 “Prajāpati emitted from himself, i.e. created, the sacrifice”; TS. 1, 6, 9, 1; 3, 3, 7, 1<sup>14</sup>) (TS., TB.). This direction seems to be of special interest in view of the doctrine of the possibility of the sacrificer’s “identification” with the god who inaugurated sacrificial worship and was the first sacrificer (ŚB. 4, 6, 1, 5; 7; 11; 12; AiB. 2, 18, 2). TB. subjoins some alternatives; “He takes it of such a size that it is equal to a joint of the sacrifice (*yajñāparuṣā sammitam*); he takes it of such a size – so great, indeed, is (manly) energy-and-virtue (*vīryam*) in man – that it is equal to *vīrya*; (or) he takes it of unlimited size, in order to obtain (for the patron) that which is unlimited” (6 f.). This passage, in which the words *yajñāparuṣā sammitam* present a difficulty, is to a great extent identical with TB. 1, 1, 9, 4 f.: “The pieces of fuel are the bone, the clarified butter the semen; in that he places the pieces of fuel on the fire after having anointed them with but-

11. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 159.

12. I refer to Gonda, The ritual sūtras, p. 496 f. – For Āpastamba’s interpretation see Caland, Śr. Āpast. I, p. 59. Keith, Veda Bl. Y. School, p. 210 translated “he takes the bunch in front”, Kashikar, Sūtras of Bharadvāja, II, p. 44 “... from the front part”, which is possible: cf. MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 12 *mukhataḥ p. g.* which may mean “from the surface”, because according to BhŚ. 1, 4, 10; ĀpŚ. 1, 4, 12 the *prastara* had been bound upon the uppermost handful of the bundle. KS. 31, 10: 12, 12 reads *purastāt p. g.*

13. Not “it” (Keith, l.c.).

14. See J. Gonda, Vedic gods and the sacrifice. Numen 30, p. 3; 5 f.

ter, he places a bone in the semen; he places three of them for copulation (and the creation of offspring)<sup>15</sup>; they are so large as this: of such a size that they are equal to P., the beginning ...; ... equal to the joint of the sacrifice" (but the Bibl. Ind. edition reads *yajñapurūṣā saṃmitāḥ* (sic), i.e. equal to the man or soul of the sacrifice, – which, being in later times (e.g. BhāgPur. 1, 5, 38) applied to Viṣṇu, who in VaikhG. 4, 12: 65, 6 is meditated upon as *yajñapurūṣa* and praised with the Puruṣa hymn RV. 10, 90, would suit the context tolerably well, and better than "joint or portion of the sacrifice"<sup>16</sup>, because there follows: "they are so large as this – so large one should know is the *vīrya* in a man – (viz.) of the size of *vīrya*; they are wet ...". A similar passage in TĀ. 5, 3, 4 f. (with the reading *yajñapurūṣā s.*) ends with "he makes it unlimited, in order to ..." (see above). If we may suppose TB. 3, 3, 6, 5 f. to express the thought that the *prastara* should be equal to Prajāpati, to the *yajñapurūṣa* (which then must denote the patron himself), and to the *vīrya* in the *purūṣa* and that it should be unlimited, the whole statement is consistent, because Prajāpati is both the limited and the unlimited (ŚB. 6, 5, 3, 7; 7, 2, 4, 30; 14, 1, 2, 18) and *vīrya* is one of Prajāpati's most essential and characteristic qualities (ŚB. 7, 1, 2, 1; 5; 6; 10) which is also said to be bestowed on the sacrificer (ŚB. 1, 4, 1, 20; 25). However, if we may infer from TS. 5, 2, 5, 1<sup>17</sup> that man could be considered equal to a division (*parus*) of the sacrifice by means of which he was measured and that his *vīrya* is congruent with, or equal to, this unit of measure – cf. MS. 3, 2, 4: 20, 16; KS. 20, 3: 20, 17 "with a cane of bamboo which is so long as a man with arms extended one measures; so great (so much) one should know is the *vīrya* in a man; with *vīrya* one measures (it)" (cf. also TB. 3, 12, 5, 12) – the reading *yajñapurūṣā* in TB. 3, 3, 6, 6 may be intelligible also. It may even be more original<sup>18</sup>. – According to MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 12 the *adhvaryu* should with the mantra "thou art the hair-tuft of Viṣṇu" (also TB. 3, 3, 6, 5) take the *prastara* from the upper or front side (*mukhataḥ*); thus he makes the sacrificer the chief and the principal person (*mukhyam* ... *śiṛṣanyam*); similarly KS. 31, 10: 12, 12; KapS. 47, 10: 293, 22.

When the *adhvaryu* takes out the *prastara*<sup>19</sup> (e.g. BŚ. 1, 13: 19, 21) he should not

15. *mithunatvāya*; see ch. X, p. 165 and compare, e.g., ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 22.
16. Dumont, in Proc. Am. Phil. Soc. 103, p. 594 understood neither this place nor TB. 3, 12, 5, 12 where golden bricks are said to be as large as the last phalanx of the finger (which is) equal in size to a joint of (interval in) the sacrifice, taking the genitive in Sāyaṇa's explanation *tac ca yajñapurūṣasya parvaṇā sadṛśam bhavati* (which is not clear) to "designate the height of the sacrificer's body taken as basis for the measurement of the sacrificial ground etc." (ibidem, 95, n. 24). Most other Vedic occurrences of *yajñapurūṣa* (TS. 5, 2, 5, 6; 6, 1, 4, 5; TB. 1, 6, 4, 3 (-*purūṣo* in Bibl. Ind.); 1, 6, 9, 1; 3, 7, 1, 5; TĀ. 5, 2, 3) do not throw any light on these places, but in TS. 5, 2, 5, 1 man (*purūṣa*) is said to be equal in size to the sacrifice and to be measured with a member or division (*parus*) of the sacrifice; "so great is he as a man with arms extended; so much *vīrya* is there in man; verily with *vīrya* he measures him". Other relevant places are KS. 20, 3: 20, 20 ... *pradeśamūtram – puruṣeṇa vai yajñāḥ saṃmito – yajñapurūṣasaṃmitam*; KapS. 31, 5: 152, 4; KS. 19, 1: 1, 4; 19, 6: 7, 12; KapS. 29, 8: 135, 20; 30, 4: 142, 7; and MS. 3, 1, 2: 3, 7 *aratnimātrī kāryā yajñapurūṣasaṃmitā. prādeśamātrī kāryā viṣṇunā yajñena saṃmitā*; 3, 1, 7: 9, 8.
17. See the preceding note.
18. For the reading of the texts see Vishva Bandhu, A Vedic Word-Concordance, I (Saṃhitās), IV, Hoshiarpur 1959, p. 2552, note 1. On this compound *yajñapurūṣasaṃmita* also J. Wackernagel, Altindische Grammatik, II, 1, Göttingen 1905, p. 229.
19. Hillebrandt, l. cit.

pass his hand over it from the bottom to the end (*anumārṣṭi*), nor from the end to the bottom (*pratimārṣṭi*), nor shake it off (BhŚ. 2, 8, 6; see also ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 5), nor draw it up (*udyauti*), nor move it forward or backward, nor throw it asunder (ĀpŚ.). He should take it out as if pulling it towards the *āhavanīya* fire (Āp., cf. Bh.) with the above mantra. These directions are based on brāhmaṇa passages such as MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 13; KS. 31, 10: 12, 13 and KapS. 47, 10: 294, 1: “He should take so much (of the grass) as he can grasp with his hand; (then) the sacrificer (will be) free from hunger (*akṣodhuka*; for hunger of the sacrificer as the result of the incorrect performance of a rite see e.g. MS. 1, 4, 11: 59, 11; 1, 6, 4: 93, 11 etc.)<sup>20</sup>; he must not stroke it upwards lest he should push away the sacrificer’s property at present and in the future ..., if he should shake it, he would drive away his (the sacrificer’s) offspring and cattle ...”.

Thereupon the *adhvaryu* places the two blades of *darbha* used for sprinkling and cleansing (*pavitre*) upon (or near) the *prastara* with “I bestow expiration and inspiration<sup>21</sup> upon the sacrificer” (thus, or without a mantra, BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 1; also ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 6 after “let this e. and i. go into the sacrificer; at the sacrifice, they indeed have been the two purifiers, the two strainers which purify the oblation” (TB. 3, 7, 4, 12); also MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 3; VārŚ. 1, 3, 3, 6 (adding that he brings the *prastara* to the *āhavanīya*); this mantra also in BhŚ. 2, 8, 7). In TB. 3, 3, 6, 7, on which this direction is based, the *pavitre* are said to represent *prāṇa* and *apāna* (also 3, 3, 4, 4; 3, 7, 4, 11). The explanation of this ‘identification’ lies in the fact that the wind (the morning air), with which breath is regarded as identical (cf. RV. 10, 90, 13; ŚB. 7, 1, 2, 5; 9, 1, 2, 38; 11, 1, 6, 17), is often said to be a purifier (cf. 1, 3, 2, 5; 1, 7, 1, 12); see especially ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 1 f. “he now prepares two strainers (*pavitre*) ... two, because this (wind) which ventilates (*pavate*) here is a means of purifying (*pavitram*); and this one ventilates so to say as one only, but on entering into man, it becomes ... two, viz. *prāṇa* and *udāna* (another vital breath, cf. 1, 3, 1, 22); and as this (purification) takes place in accordance with that (process of breathing), there are two (strainers)”;

likewise 1, 8, 3, 12. Thereupon, it is stated in BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 2, the *adhvaryu* must give the *prastara* to the sacrificer or the *brahman* (likewise MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 3 and VārG. 1, 3, 3, 7 adding “after having taken it away from before the *āhavanīya* on the south side”); in BhŚ. 2, 8, 9 f. he hands it over to the *brahman* (with “I make thee embodied with *prāṇa* and *apāna*”) who passes it on to the sacrificer (with “I place the *prāṇa* and *apāna* within the sacrificer”); in ĀpŚ. 2, 8, 6 f. the *prastara* (likewise with the *pavitre*) is given to the sacrificer (with the former mantra) who hands them to be the *brahman* (no mantra being mentioned); either the *brahman* or the sacrificer keeps it.

After having put some *darbha* grass on the *vedī* and so on (e.g. ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 1 ff.; cf. ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 11) the *adhvaryu*, holding the *prastara* – which he has obviously received back – in his hand<sup>22</sup>, places the enclosing sticks round the *āhavanīya* fire;

20. Here KS. and KapS. insert: “(and) the *adhvaryu* is not likely to become naked, i.e. unable to clothe himself” (cf. AiB. 1, 29, 20).

21. As to *prāṇāpāna* see Caland, in ZDMG 55, p. 261 ff.

22. The significance of holding grass in the hand has been discussed in other chapters.



BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 7; BhŚ. 2, 9, 3; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 5; TB. 3, 3, 6, 8, explaining “the *prastara* represents the sacrificer; consequently, it is the sacrificer himself who places the sticks around”. Notice that the *adhvaryu* acts for, or on behalf of, the sacrificer (e.g. ĀpŚ. 10, 1, 3); see also MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 8; VārŚ. 1, 3, 3, 14. According to MS. 4, 1, 13: 17, 18; KS. 31, 10: 12, 17; KapS. 47, 10: 294, 5 the *adhvaryu* holding the *prastara*, which represents the sacrificer, in his hand signifies that the latter surrounds himself in order to be safe (*ahimsāyai*) or to ward off the demons. Thereupon he proceeds to trim the fire of the *āhavanīya* – which is the head at the foremost or eastern end of the sacrificial ground (ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 12) – while holding the *prastara* close over it (*upari*, ŚB., l.c., observing that the *prastara* represents the top-knot<sup>23</sup>, which now is put on the *āhavanīya*; see the elaborate description in KŚ. 2, 7, 29 ff.; likewise ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 7, but BŚ., BhŚ., MŚ. and VārŚ. do not mention the *prastara* in this connexion). At a later moment he turns to the *vedi* and places with “you are the arms of Savitar” (VS. 2, 5) – in the Ṛgveda (2, 38, 2; 4, 53, 3 f.; 6, 71, 1; 5 etc.) Savitar is said to raise his arms with which he arouses all beings and reduces them to obedience – two blades of grass (*tr̥ṇe*) from the *barhis*<sup>24</sup>, the so-called *vidhṛtis*<sup>25</sup>, across (the grass strewn on the *vedi*) with their tips pointing to the north (KŚ. 2, 8, 5). Similarly, BŚ. 1, 13: 20, 16; BhŚ. 2, 9, 9; ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 13 with the mantra “you are the two means of restraining (subduing) (*yantre*)<sup>26</sup> of the common people (*viś*)<sup>27</sup>”, TB. 3, 3, 6, 10 explaining “(thus he says) in order (that the sacrificer may) restrain and control the common people (*viśam yatyai*)<sup>28</sup>. MŚ. 12 and VārŚ. 16 prescribe the mantra “you are the two dividers (barriers, *vidhṛtī*) of all the people” (MS. 1, 1, 12: 7, 16). According to BhŚ. 4, 9, 4; ĀpŚ. 4, 7, 1 the patron then recites the words TB. 3, 7, 6 l “this *prastara* is the supporter of both (the *juhū* and the *upabhṛt*), of the fore-offerings and the after-offerings ... I lay the sacrificial spoons on it”.

Thereupon he spreads the *prastara* (with its top towards the east, TB., l.c., comm.) with VS. 2, 5 “I spread thee soft as wool, pleasant for the gods to sit upon” (KŚ. 2, 8, 10; ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 11); with TS. 1, 1, 11, 2 p “seat yourself upon the seat of the Vasus, the Rudras, and the Ādityas” (BhŚ. 1, 13: 20, 17; BhŚ. 9; ĀpŚ. 13) – these are the gods associated with the three soma services (ŚB. 4, 3, 5, 1; 12, 3, 4, 1; see also Mahīdhara, on VS., l.c.) and already in the ṚV., 1, 45, 1 etc. often mentioned together; here they figure no doubt primarily as gods of earth, intermediate space, and sky (ŚB. 6, 5, 2, 3 f.) –; or with MS., l.c. “thou art the seat of

23. See above.

24. This practice (also mentioned in BhŚ.) belongs to the Kāṇvīyas (comm.); according to the followers of the Kāṭhaka they are taken from the *prastara*.

25. The *vidhṛtis* are used for separating the strew from the *prastara*. See ch. I.

26. Not “Stütze” (Caland, ĀpŚ., l.c.), or “props” (Keith, TS. 1, 1, 11 o, Veda Bl. Y. School, p. 13).

27. The term *viś* does not however always denote the third estate. See J. Gonda, Triads in the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1976, p. 240, s.v.

28. In ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 10 the *prastara* is stated to represent nobility (*kṣātra*) and the *barhis* the common people (*viś*). This may be the meaning of the words *kṣātram vai prastaro viśa itaram barhiḥ*; Eggeling’s translation “... and the other *barhis*” might – but does not necessarily – imply that the *prastara* is a *barhis*. For this use of words for “(an)other” in ancient Indo-European languages see e.g., in Greek, Odyssey 2, 412; in Latin, Livy 5, 39, 3 *circa moenia aliasque portas*, and in general, J. Gonda, Reflections on the numerals “one” and “two” in ancient Indo-European languages, Utrecht 1953, p. 57.

...” MŚ. 13; VārŚ. 17. “It is indeed on the seat of the deities that he seats the *prastara*” (TB. 10). The sacrificer should over the *prastara* being placed utter a mantra in which this grass is said to be a supporter of the *juhū* and *upabhr̥t*<sup>29</sup> ladles and of the fore- and after-offerings (BhŚ. 4, 9, 4; ĀpŚ. 4, 7, 1). While the *prastara* is still held down by his left hand the *adhvaryu* seizes the *juhū* with his right hand in order to prevent the demons from entering in the meantime – “for a brahmin (the officiant) is a repeller of the demons” (ŚB. 13; KŚ. 12; for demons being scorched or burnt by a sacrificial spoon see ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 4) – with VS. 2, 6 “thou art abounding in ghee, *juhū* by name”. Ghee is a thunderbolt (ŚB. 3, 9, 3, 26 etc.), the essence or life-sap of the universe (7, 2, 3, 4) and is used for sprinkling, consecrating and warding off misfortune<sup>30</sup>. He should make the handle of the *juhū* agree with the roots of the *prastara* (BhŚ. 12; also VārŚ. 19; cf. MŚ. 15); or these roots should be somewhat pulled back (ĀpŚ. 14)<sup>31</sup>, and lie towards the west. He then (KŚ. 2, 8, 12 f.) places the *juhū* which, like the *prastara* (ŚB. 10), represents nobility (*kṣātra*, ŚB. 15), on the *prastara* and the two other spoons (*upabhr̥t* and *dhruvā*) below, on the *barhis*, which, like these implements – which are addressed with similar mantras (ŚB. 14; KŚ. 13) – represents the common Aryan people (*viś*). “He thereby makes the *kṣātra* superior to the *viś*”. The Taittirīyas, using somewhat different mantras – which however are characterized by the same names and terms and, hence by the same bestowing and confirming of specific power – perform the same rite, describing it somewhat more elaborately: the ladles should not touch each other (BhŚ. 15; ĀpŚ. 15, likewise MŚ. 16; VārŚ. 21) etc. The fact that the *prastara* is put over the *barhis* makes the sacrificer superior to the one who does not sacrifice (TS. 2, 6, 5, 3). In the mantras of the Maitrāyaṇīyas (MS. 1, 1, 12: 7, 17; MŚ. 14 ff.; VārŚ. 18 ff.) the three ladles are successively said to be sky, intermediate space and earth by birth. The co-ordination – which occurs, e.g., also ŚB. 1, 3, 2, 4 (cf. 1, 8, 3, 13!) – with this most frequent tripartition is the theoretical basis of various ritual operations<sup>32</sup>. The cakes are placed behind (to the west of) the ladles (BhŚ. 12, 11, 8; ĀpŚ. 2, 11, 7). TB. 3, 3, 6, 11 informs us that the spoons have now been placed in the sphere of religious and ritual merit (*sukṛtasya loke*)<sup>33</sup>, which is reality (truth, *satyam*). The accompanying mantra, “protect them, O Viṣṇu”, is in order to ensure firmness of the sacrifice (Viṣṇu is the sacrifice); there follows a prayer for the sacrifice, the sacrificer, and the *adhvaryu* himself.

Later on, the *adhvaryu* has to perform a remarkable ritual act (see also ŚB. 11, 5, 2, 3 with an explanation): he should cross the *vedi* in front (to the east) of the *dhruvā* spoon without disturbing the *prastara* (BhŚ. 2, 13, 7) or without stepping upon it (ĀpŚ. 2, 13, 7; TB. 3, 3, 7, 6; BŚ. 1, 15: 23, 10; KŚ. 3, 1, 17; MŚ. 1, 3, 1, 13; VārŚ. 1, 3, 4, 8 do not mention it. The mantra “Agni and Viṣṇu, let me not step down upon you” is to atone for this deed; Agni is represented by the *āhava-*

29. See E.P. Hamp, in IJ 22 (1980), p. 141.

30. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 176 ff.

31. As to the awareness of the necessity of harmony, agreement, being identical in some important respect and so on see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 23 ff. – On an alternative see ĀpŚ. 2, 10, 1 f.

32. Gonda, Triads, p. 95.

33. See Gonda, Loka, Amsterdam Acad. 1966, p. 115 etc.

*nīya*, Viṣṇu, the sacrifice, by the spoons (TB., l.c.). In the same mantra these gods, addressed as *lokakṛtau* “makers of *loka*”, are besought for this important “room to live in safety” (TS. 1, 1, 12 e f g). Is the *vedi* here regarded as the *āyatana* of the sacrificer, i.e. the place that belongs to him and to which he regularly resorts to achieve a definite purpose?

According to ĀpŚ. 2, 18, 3 and HŚ. 2, 2, 23 the *adhvaryu* has to anoint the *prastara* with sacrificial butter every time he takes the spoonfuls of this sacrificial material which are to be offered. That means that beneficial power is transmitted to it<sup>34</sup>.

At a later moment, before the beginning of the after-offerings, the *adhvaryu* performing the same sacrifice should throw the two *pavitre* on the *prastara* (KŚ. 3, 4, 25) with “protect the expiration and inspiration of the patron”. ŚB. 1, 8, 1, 44 supplies the following explanation: “the *prastara* represents the patron, and the two *pavitre* *prāṇa* and *apāna* (cf. ŚB. 1, 1, 3, 2; 3, 1, 3, 20); he thereby places (imparts, *dadhāti*) expiration and inspiration in (to) him”.

The same ‘identification’ occurs at ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 11: the *adhvaryu* takes the *prastara* in his hand (KŚ. 3, 6, 3, dealing with the after-offerings); this gesture means wishing (the patron) a safe and sound arrival (at his own place)<sup>35</sup>, that is in the world of the gods (*devaloka*<sup>36</sup>) to which his sacrifice has gone. According to BhŚ. 3, 5, 8; ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 4; MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 7; VārŚ. 1, 3, 6, 1 (MS. 1, 1, 13: 8, 13) he lifts up the *juhū* with the *prastara* with “with the impulse of (re-)creative power (vigour, *vāja*), by elevation, Indra has lifted me up”. “The (mantra, an) *anuṣṭubh* stanza, means a firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*), *vāja* is food (for the patron) for being firmly founded” (TB. 3, 3, 9, 1)<sup>37</sup>. The *juhū* should be placed on the *vedi*, but not on the *prastara* (BhŚ. 3, 5, 13; ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 8; MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 9), its place when the fore-offerings are made (ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 15; 2, 10, 2; 2, 17, 7).

After having removed the *vidhṛtis*, he thereupon anoints the *prastara* three times (TB., l.c.; cf. ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 9). – When the *prastara* is to be anointed (ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 9) it is taken away from the *vidhṛtis* on which it had been laid (2, 9, 13); when it is anointed the patron recites TB. 3, 7, 5, 10 r “... let it go to the divine heavens” (ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 3). It is anointed with the clarified butter – which is fiery energy (*tejas*, TB. 2) – that is left over in the three spoons – which represent the three provinces of the universe (TB., l.c.; see above). Consequently, he anoints the sacrificer with *tejas* for the tripartite universe (TB.). He anoints the *prastara* in regular order, i.e. first the tip of it in the *juhū*, etc.; that means that he anoints the sacrificer in regular order (TB.). For ritual particulars see BŚ. 1, 19: 28, 15; BhŚ. 3, 5, 9 ff. Over the *prastara* being anointed the sacrificer recites a mantra in which the smearing with ghee and the co-operation of some deities are confirmed and the *prastara* is enjoined to go to the heavenly sphere (BhŚ. 4, 18, 1; ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 3). According to TS. 2, 6, 5, 3 this rite makes the *prastara* into an oblation and causes it to go to the heavenly

34. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 477, s.v. anointing.

35. *svagākaroti*, i.e. *svasthānagāmīnaṃ karoti* (comm.).

36. See J. Gonda, *Loka*, p. 166, s.v.

37. For reasons of space the other elements of this rite, which do not relate to the *prastara*, and their significance cannot be discussed here.

world for the sacrificer. According to ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 12 the *adhvaryu* makes the *prastara* (and, implicitly, the sacrificer) an oblation (*āhuti*), thinking “that he will, as an oblation, go to the world of the gods” (cf. KŚ. 4). The mantra used is, according to KŚ., VS. 2, 16 d “the birds must enjoy (*viyantu*, but this form can also mean “must go away”)<sup>38</sup>, licking what is anointed” (also BŚ. 1, 19: 28, 18; BhŚ. 3, 5, 14; ĀpŚ. 3, 6, 1). According to the comm. on VS. the birds are the metres, but one should rather follow ŚB. 14 – “he thereby causes it (the *prastara* and the patron) to be(come) a bird and fly up to the world of the gods” – which is in harmony with TB. 3, 3, 9, 3, where the same rite is elaborately described (the mantra used here is not, as in VS., *vyantu vayo ’ktaṃ rihāṇāḥ*, but *aktaṃ r. vy. v.*, TS. 1, 1, 13 d with the same meaning<sup>39</sup>). See also KS. 31, 11: 14, 7 and KapS. 47, 11: 295, 7: “with the mantra ‘becoming the spotted sterile cow of the Maruts (cf. ŚB. 5, 1, 3, 3; cf. also 5, 5, 2, 9; this animal is their victim) go to heaven’ he causes the sacrificer, having become an oblation, to go to the heavenly world”. The same thought is expressed at KS. 33, 3: 21, 13. One should, however, take precautionary measures, because it is not the patron’s intention to be bodily received into the community of the gods *hic et nunc*. That is why the *adhvaryu* has to draw the *prastara* near the ground lest he should remove the sacrificer from his firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*) and by this ritual act the officiant also secures rain here (*iha*, in this world, in the region inhabited by the patron). For this rite may also serve a worldly purpose<sup>40</sup>.

Should the officiant, acting for his patron, desire rain, then he must take up the *prastara* in his hand (KŚ. 3, 6, 3; ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 11 f.) with the mantra VS. 2, 16 d “be, O Heaven and Earth, in harmony with each other”, for, ŚB. observes, then indeed it rains (see also ŚB. 15). According to TB. 3, 3, 9, 4 the *adhvaryu*, being desirous of rain, should address the stalks of the *prastara* with the mantra “you are the spotted steeds of the Maruts” (TS. 1, 1, 13 g), observing that these deities are the lords of rain (see below). – TB. 3, 3, 9, 4 has the *adhvaryu* utter two more wishes: “I would not brush away the offspring and (its) womb” – thus he says in order to protect the (patron’s) offspring – and “let the waters and the plants swell” – he causes these to swell”.

According to MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 10 ff. the *adhvaryu* first anoints the enclosing sticks with the *juhū* (also BŚ. 1, 29: 28, 15; BhŚ. 3, 5, 12; ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 7) and joins the middle one with the tip of the ladle, the tips of the *prastara* with its handle. That means that the ladle is made a means of connecting the sacrifice with that *paridhi*, which surrounds and protects the ritual fire being regarded as one of Agni’s elder brothers (TS. 6, 2, 8, 4 ff.)<sup>41</sup> and as one of the fences of the sacrificer (see the mantras TS. 1, 1, 11 i, k, l, which are used when the *adhvaryu* places them, holding the *prastara* in his hand (MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 8; see above)). Thereupon the *adhvaryu* requests the *agnīdhra* to summon the *hotar* with “the divine *hotars* are summoned for the announcement (proclamation of what is prosperous (auspicious, *bhadravācyā*)), the human

38. On this mantra etc. see also Eggeling, Śat. Br. 1, p. 242, n. 1.

39. *vyantu* does not mean here “let ... go asunder” (thus Keith, Veda Bl. Y. School, p. 15).

40. I also refer to ch. II.

41. On the *paridhis* see Krick, Feuergründung, p. 552 ff.



(*hotar*) for the recitation of what is recited well (*sūktavākāya*)<sup>42</sup>. See also VārŚ. 1, 2, 6, 7. *Sūktavāka* is the technical name of a particular series of mantras to be repeated by the *hotar*<sup>43</sup>. At the end of the sacrifice, this is together with the *sūktavāka* finally firmly established in the sacrificer (ŚB. 4, 4, 4, 14). After addressing Heaven and Earth and stating that this blissful event (*bhadram*) has taken place, the *hotar* declares that Agni and the other deities have accepted the oblations; the patron of the sacrifice is said to pray for a complete duration of life, offspring and so on; “Agni obtains that from the gods; (may) we men (obtain it) from Agni”. In the meantime the *maitrāyaṇīya adhvaryu* drops the two *vidhrtis* on the *barhis* (“I place *prāṇa* and *apāna* in the sacrificer”, MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 14; cf. VārŚ. 1, 3, 6, 6), loosens one blade of grass (*trṇa*) from the *prastara* (“for long life”, 14; VārŚ. 7) and dips the *prastara* into the ladles (see above), and so on. While the *hotar* mentions the prayer of the sacrificer (see above, 17; cf. VārŚ. 8) he throws the *prastara* together with the *sākhā*-(*pavitra*; cf. ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 9) into the fire<sup>44</sup>. Then, summoned by him, the *agnīdh* lets the *prastara* three times go with his hand (19; VārŚ. 11). With “then favour us with rain” he throws the (above, 14) one blade (*trṇa*) into the fire (21; VārŚ. 12).

The Taittirīyas mention some more particulars. The above *trṇa* is loosened with “for a complete duration of life thee” (*āyuse tvā*) and laid down knowingly before the *hotar* is invited to recite the *sūktavāka* (ĀpŚ. 3, 6, 5; cf. BŚ. 1, 19; 28, 19; BhŚ. 3, 5, 16). The *adhvaryu* takes the *prastara* with both hands, the right hand above the left one. When he throws the *prastara* on the fire of the *āhavanīya*, he should not disturb the burning embers (BhŚ. 3, 6, 2), not pull it back etc. (BhŚ. 3, more elaborately: not move it to and fro, stroke it, but push it carefully ĀpŚ. 3, 6, 8 f. and BŚ. 1, 19; 29, 3). ĀpŚ. 10 refers to TS. 2, 6, 5, 3 ff.: “He sees to it that the tops (of the *prastara*) are not broken off; if they were broken, the *prastara* would not go aloft for the sacrificer; he pushes it upwards as it were, for the world of heaven is upwards; he depresses it, he brings rain for him down (cf. KS. 25, 5: 108, 9; KapS. 39, 2: 214, 9; KŚ. 3, 6, 8 prescribes taking one blade (*trṇa*) from the lower part of the *prastara* that is held in his hand). If he should put forward the tops too much, a violent disease<sup>45</sup> would destroy himself. If he should throw it (so that the roots, which are, of course, to be behind, are) in front, he would thrust the sacrificer from the world of heaven. By directing the tops to the east he makes the sacrificer go to that world. If he were to spread the *prastara* in all (diverse) directions, a daughter

42. Translations such as “song of praise” (Eggeling, ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 18), “utterance of prayer” (Keith, TS. 2, 6, 9, 5), “speech of adoration” (Ch. Sen, Dictionary of the Vedic rituals, Delhi 1978) should be avoided.

43. For the mantras and rules about its recitation see ĀśvŚ. 1, 9, 1; also TB. 3, 5, 10; ŚB. 1, 9, 1, 4-23; ŚŚ. 1, 4, 1-19; TS. 2, 6, 9, 5 ff. In ŚB. 1, 9, 1, 4 the *sūktavāka* and the *namovāka* “utterance of homage” are said to constitute sacrificial worship; in 11, 2, 1, 5 it is regarded as an oblation; in 11, 2, 7, 28 as “the completion (or conclusion, *saṁsthā*, of the sacrificial ceremony); and who-soever knows this secures for himself the *saṁsthā* and he now gains whatever is to be gained by the *saṁsthā*; he reaches the *saṁsthā* of his period of life”. For particulars and the contents see P.V. Kane, History of Dharmaśāstra, II, Poona 1941, p. 1072 ff. and Hillebrandt, op. cit., p. 142 ff.

44. See also Staal, Agni, p. 686.

45. See Keith, Veda Black Yajus School, p. 211, n. 1.



would be born to him; he spreads it upwards (*ūrdhvam*), for erect (*ūrdhvam*<sup>46</sup>) is, so to say, a characteristic of a man, then a male child is born to him; and so on". Hence also ĀpŚ. 3, 6, 11: if the sacrificer should wish that a daughter is born to him, the *adhvaryu* must throw the *prastara* into the fire after having spread out (the grasses of) the *prastara*. However, KS. 25, 5: 108, 10 and KapS. 39, 2: 214, 11 give a somewhat different explanation: "The *adhvaryu* should throw the *prastara* upwards (*ūrdhvam*), if he wants a son to be born to the sacrificer, because a man is above (*ūrdhvaḥ*); he should throw it while extending it (*prathayitvā*), if he wants a daughter to be born, for a woman is, so to say, extended".

Similar precautions, accounting for a complicated procedure, are towards the end of the sacrifice also to be taken by the followers of the White Yajurveda. "If", for instance, "the *adhvaryu* were to throw the whole *prastara* (at once) into the fire, the patron would immediately go to yonder world" (ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 16). The he must throw the remainder of the *prastara* into the (*āhavanīya*) fire (KŚ. 3, 6, 8), because "were he not to do this, he would cut off the patron from (yonder) world" (ŚB. 17). By means of the following procedure he does not cut him off: he burns the *prastara* with his hand, smoothing it down with his fingers, not with pieces of wood etc., because in that way one pierces a corpse. The top of the *prastara* is directed towards one of the auspicious regions, the east or the north (KŚ. 9; ŚB. 18). But before doing this he holds the *prastara* for a moment in order to make sure he will cause the patron's other self to go where it (during the performance of the rite) went (i.e. to the world of the gods) (ŚB. 17): the other self, that is, as contrasted with the self (*ātman*) in the body from which it is not however essentially different, the "spiritual" self<sup>47</sup>. – In the section on the *sāmnāyā* – the mixture of fresh boiled milk and sour milk offered to Indra – KŚ. 4, 2, 41 states that in a sacrifice on the day of new moon the *prastara* is thrown into the fire together with the branch (with which the calves have been driven away, comm.), an important feature of this rite, cf. ŚB. 1, 7, 13 ff.; KŚ. 4, 2, 7; 13; 15; 40; this branch is expected to protect the sacrificer's cattle (ŚB. 1, 7, 1, 8; KŚ. 4, 2, 11; VS. 1, 1 d).

Returning for a moment to the Taittirīyas I only mention that when the *hotar* repeating the *sūktavāka* has reached the prayer of the sacrificer, the *adhvaryu* requests the *āgnīdhra* to cause the *prastara* to meet the fire (BhŚ. 3, 6, 5). The *āgnīdhra* then lifts up the *prastara* in three stages through his *añjali* (the open hands placed side by side and slightly hollowed, BhŚ. 6, ĀpŚ. 3, 7, 3), but does not let it go astray, BhŚ. 7; ĀpŚ. 3 prescribing mantras that refer to Agni, Indra and Sūrya, the gods of the three provinces of the universe who are besought to convey the sacrificer (represented by the *prastara*) to the deity (TS. 1, 6, 4 p; cf. 1, 7, 4, 3 f.). Notice that according to Bh. and Āp. it is the *āgnīdhra* who throws the *prastara* into the fire, according to BŚ. 1, 19: 29, 3 (and the Vājasaneyins, KŚ. 3, 6, 8; ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 17; see above) the *adhvaryu*. ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 7 has the sacrificer recite the same mantras

46. Cf. *ūrdhvalinga* "erecto pene, ithyphallic" as an epithet of Śiva (Mbh. 13, 17, 45); see W. Doniger O'Flaherty, *Asceticism and eroticism in the mythology of Śiva*, London 1973, p. 9 ff.

47. Cf., e.g., BĀU. 4, 3, 35 and J.M. van Gelder, *Der Ātman in der Grossen-Wald-Geheimlehre*, 's-Gravenhage 1957, p. 99 f.; 110.

(on Agni, Indra and Sūrya). “In that the officiant puts the *prastara* on the *āhavanīya* he makes the sacrificer go to the heavenly world” (TS. 2, 6, 5, 5). According to MS. 1, 4, 5: 53, 8 one should, when the *prastara* is thrown into the fire, wish that one’s prayer may be effectual and reach the gods or ask for a favour or blessing when one has addressed one’s prayer to the gods. Thereupon the *āgnīdhra* requests the *adhvaryu* to put the *tr̥ṇa* which had been taken out of the *prastara* (see above) after (the *prastara*) into the fire with “hail to the bodies” (BhŚ. 9; ĀpŚ. 5). After having pointed to that blade three times with his forefinger he addresses, over the fire, a prayer to Agni, the protector of life and eyes, for protection of his life and eye (BhŚ. 12; ĀpŚ. 6; TS. 1, 1, 13 i and k). The same rite is performed by the followers of the White Yajurveda (ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 19; KŚ. 3, 6, 14; VS. 2, 16 f), who want the *adhvaryu* to pronounce the mantra and touch himself (near his heart or his eyes). This gesture is a means of infusing the energy that is inherent in the mantra<sup>48</sup>. “As far as the *adhvaryu* throws the *prastara*, so far his life and his faculty of seeing are diminished” (TB. 3, 3, 9, 5). By reciting these mantras he puts life and the faculty of seeing in himself (*ibidem*)<sup>49</sup>. Thereupon he touches the earth within the *vedi* with “thou art immovable” (firm, *dhruvā*, TS. 1, 1, 13 l), in order to find a firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*) in it (cf. TS. 2, 6, 5, 6). The throwing of the *tr̥ṇa* into the fire is accompanied by the sacrificer with: “(this blade of grass) is a bolt stretched down from heaven and sprouted from the earth; we burn (afflict) our hater (enemy) with that (blade) that has a thousand joints; my enemy must be burnt (afflicted) much; O plant, may I not be burnt” (BhŚ. 4, 18, 4; ĀpŚ. 4, 12, 8; TB. 3, 7, 6, 19). Being requested by the *āgnīdhra* to converse with him, the *adhvaryu* asks him whether it (the *prastara*, comm. on ĀpŚ. 9; BhŚ. 13) has gone. Those who identify the *prastara* with the sacrificer take the question, which is answered in the affirmative, to mean: “Has the sacrificer entered the world of heaven?” “So he should say only, ‘has he gone?’, (then) he makes the sacrificer go to the heavenly world” (TS. 2, 6, 5, 6).

In the section that deals with the so-called *patnīsamyājas*, the offering made to some deities along with the wives of the gods ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 14 states that this ceremony concludes with the invocation of the *idā* – a repetition of the rite described in 1, 8, 1, 18 with special reference to the sacrificer’s wife. This rite is a substitute for the destruction of *prastara* and *paridhis* which have already been consumed by fire. “For on that (former) occasion when he wishes godspeed (i.e. blesses) by (throwing) the *prastara* into the fire, godspeed is also wished to this wife (i.e. she is blessed also), since she corresponds to (is the counterpart of<sup>50</sup>) the husband. But where he to use a manifestation (*rūpa*) of (i.e. a substitute, *pratinīdhi*, (comm.) for) the *prastara*, he would produce lassitude (*iyasitam*) in the wife. That is why he should conclude with the *idā*. However, a substitute for the *prastara* (in the form of a stalk of the reed-grass of the *veda* (broom)) is (optionally) made”. Then he blesses the wife with that substitute (§ 15). This *vedatr̥ṇa* is anointed in the same way as has been done in the case of the *prastara* (KŚ. 3, 7, 14; see also ŚB. § 16 ff.).

48. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 86. See, e.g., also ŚB. 3, 3, 1, 9; 5, 1, 5, 26 and compare, e.g., 1, 2, 4, 7.

49. For Agni as protector see Macdonell, Vedic mythology, p. 97 f; for dangerous looking etc. J. Gonda, Eye and gaze in the Veda, Amsterdam Acad. 1969, p. 30 f.; 40, 42 f.

50. On this passage see A. Minard, Trois énigmes sur les Cent Chemins, I, Paris 1949, p. 70, § 191.

Now attention may be drawn to some other details, particular customs and uses of the *prastara* in rituals other than those of full and new moon.

In the mantra TS. 1, 1, 13, 2 o (cf. KS. 1, 12: 18) etc., which accompanies the offering into the fire of the remains of the oblation (BhŚ. 3, 6, 17; ĀpŚ. 3, 7, 14), two categories of gods seem to be addressed as the sharers in this gift, viz. those who are standing on the *prastara* (*prastareṣṭhāḥ*) and those who are seated on the *barhis*. See TB. 3, 3, 9, 7 and also KS. 1, 12: 7, 18; MS. 1, 1, 13: 9, 3 (cf. MŚ. 1, 3, 4, 27 enjoining the officiant to offer on the *paridhis*, and compare also Kauś. 6, 9 and BŚ. 1, 19: 29, 16). The same quarter of the stanza occurs also in Kauś. 6, 9 used, on the same occasion, and as AVP. 20, 34, 2. VS. 2, 18 reads *prastareṣṭhāḥ paridheyāś ca devāḥ*, i.e. “gods staying on the *prastara* and representing the *paridhis* (*paridhibhavāḥ*, comm.)”, but VSK. 2, 4, 6 has *p. paridhayaś ca d.*, ‘identifying’ the second group of gods with the enclosing sticks; see also ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 25 (as VSM.) adding “for both the *prastara* and the *paridhis* have been thrown into the fire”; KŚ. 3, 6, 18. See also Vait. 4, 7.

The stereotyped equation “the *prastara* is the sacrificer”<sup>51</sup> does not exclude the possibilities of other ‘identifications’ of the *yajamāna*. In the also otherwise instructive passage AiB. 2, 3, 1 ff. the sacrificial post (*yūpa*, which is the subject of this section) is said to stand at the end of the ceremony, if the sacrificer is desirous of cattle, but one should throw it into the fire for a *yajamāna* who desires heaven. “The ancients used to throw it into the fire, (thinking) “the post is the sacrificer, the *prastara* (i.e. “the handful of *darbha* of that name”, comm.) is the sacrificer; Agni is the womb of the gods (*devayoni*); having come into existence from Agni the *devayoni* from the oblation, he will with a body of gold (which represents continued life<sup>52</sup>) go aloft to the world of heaven, and so on”. (Compare however ŚB. 3, 7, 1, 29 ff.). The very reason for referring to the *prastara* seems to have been the desire, on the author’s part, to preclude any chance of misapprehension. An occasional equation of sacrificer and *yūpa* does not do away with the stereotyped “the *prastara* represents the *yajamāna*”.

When towards the end of the description of the animal sacrifice the chip of the sacrificial stake has been offered (cf., e.g., BhŚ. 7, 22, 1; ĀpŚ. 7, 27, 4), BŚ. 4, 10: 125, 8 states that the two spoons are put each in its own regular place and then are pushed apart with the *vājavant* stanzas (cf. e.g. BhŚ. 3, 5, 7–11). Thereupon the *prastara* and the *paridhis* are mixed and mingled (with the fire, see, e.g., BhŚ. 3, 6, 5, and cf. ĀpŚ. 7, 27, 8) with the auspicious formula *śamyu*; and the *patnīsamyājas* (cf., e.g., ŚB. 3, 8, 5, 6) are performed with the tail of the victim (see, e.g., ĀpŚ. 7, 27, 9 ff.). – See also BŚ. 16, 3: 248, 1 (*soma* ceremony of twelve days’ duration): “they remove the *paridhis*, throw the *prastara* into the fire” (thus Baudhāyana); “they throw the *prastara* and the *paridhis* into the fire” (thus Śāliki, 23, 9: 164, 11).

A clear case of the belief in the existence of a correlation between a ritual action

51. MS. 3, 8, 6: 101, 15 ff. makes mention of identifications of the *vedi*, the *barhis* and the *prastara* in the same context: the *vedi* is as large as the earth, the *barhis* represents *prajāḥ*, the *prastara* the patron (sacrificer).

52. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 140.

and physiological facts occurs in ŚB. 11, 4, 1, 14. The authority whose words are quoted explicitly states that the hair of man's beard, arm-pits etc. grow, because the officiant spreads the *prastara* and that one first becomes grey on the head, because the *prastara* is at first thrown into the fire after the oblations. This passage forms part of a section in which a number of esoteric doctrines concerning the *agnihotra* are set forth (ŚB. 11, 3, 1, 1 ff.). It will be remembered that there are other cases of mutual relations between ritual grass and hair.

In particular cases the directions regarding the *prastara* deviate from the rules to be obeyed by the performers of a model *iṣṭi*. In the case of a so-called *iṣur iṣṭi* "arrow (unbloody) sacrifice", which is performed between the one-day soma ceremonies – supposed to fulfil the hopes of one desirous of cattle – called *udbhid*, i.e. "bursting or driving out, off, through or forth" and *balabhid* "breaking physical force" (see, e.g., ĀpŚ. 22, 11, 20; LŚ. 9, 4, 11; ŚŚ. 14, 14, 1; JB. 2, 89 f.), the enclosing sticks have points like arrows (KŚ. 22, 10, 25 (*tikṣṇāḥ śarā eva paridhayaḥ*)) and the *prastara* is accordingly to be taken from the top part of the *barhis*, not from its roots as in the model *iṣṭi*.

In an addition to BŚ. 3, 20 the question is raised as to what has to be done, if the patron is a drinker of spirituous liquor (called *surā*) or is sojourning abroad (20, 24: 54, 3). According to Baudhāyana one should throw his share together with his *prastara* into the fire (*anupraharet*); or one should cover his share all round with sacrificial butter and offer it; then his share becomes a *prastara* (see also 24, 33: 220, 8). Śāliki's opinion can be omitted here.

In a description of the *vaiśvadeva*, the first of the seasonal sacrifices, young shooting grasses (*prasvaḥ*) are said to be tied near (the *barhis*, comm. on KŚ. 5, 1, 26) and used for the *prastara*, because they are regarded as something productive (*prajanam*, ŚB. 2, 5, 1, 18; ŚBK. 1, 4, 3, 15). In this connexion KŚ. 5, 1, 26 prescribes the use of, or rather speaks of, *kuśaprasvaḥ* (i.e. *darbhamañjaryah*, comm.). See also TB. 1, 6, 3, 2; BŚ. 5, 1: 128, 7; ĀpŚ. 8, 1, 10 (*prasūmayam*, i.e. *puṣpīṭāḥ darbhāḥ*, comm.); MŚ. 1, 7, 1, 9 etc. The *vaiśvadeva* is performed at the commencement of spring. This season is indicated, or rather the blessings expected from it (prosperity, *puṣṭi*, ŚB. 22; TB., l.c.) are elicited, by the shooting grasses, as well as by the performance of nine fore-offerings and nine after-offerings (ŚB. § 20; ŚŚ. 3, 13, 18; 25 etc.), the number nine being often found in connexion with powers concerned with vegetation and so on<sup>53</sup>, and other particulars.

For the performance of the *varuṇapraghāsa* the *adhvaryu* and his assistant, the *prati-prasthātar*, prepare two *vedis*, the former a northern, the latter a southern one; whatever the former does on the northern *vedi*, his assistant does on the southern (see e.g. BhŚ. 8, 5, 7 ff.)<sup>54</sup>. They should each fetch a *barhis* and a bundle of firewood (8, 6, 3), and sprinkle these (BŚ. 5, 6: 135, 6 f.) and each take a *prastara* (135, 8), spread the *barhis*, place the *paridhis* round (their respective fires), holding the *prastara* in their hands, and so on, and place the *prastaras* on the *vidhṛtis* and the *juhūs* on the *prastaras* (135, 11 f.).

53. Gonda, Aspects of early Viṣṇuism, p. 95.

54. For particulars see Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 392 f.



The *adhvaryu* performing this sacrifice for the Fathers (*mahāpitryajña*) on the occasion of the *sākamedha* ceremonies should take and deposit the *prastara* without reciting any formula (BhŚ. 8, 18, 3; ĀpŚ. 8, 14, 7). The motive for this silent performance is given in TB. 1, 6, 8, 8: "If he should take the *prastara* with a formula (*yajus*), the patron of the sacrifice would die (prematurely); if he should not take it, he (the patron) would be without an *āyatana*, i.e. without a correlative position which participates in the essence of its correlate (a dangerous situation)"<sup>55</sup>. The former possibility would involve the consecration of the patron (by means of a formula), the latter would result from the absence of the *prastara* from the place where it belongs<sup>56</sup>.

In contrast to what should be done on the occasion of an *iṣṭi* (see, e.g., ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 5) the officiant performing the *mahāpitryajña* seizes, according to ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 14, the knot of the *prastara* bunch but not the *prastara*, because the Fathers have departed once for all (*sakṛt*)<sup>57</sup>. Performing that action – which is to convey the sacrificer to the world of heaven (1, 8, 3, 11) – would be inappropriate and infringe the rules of correspondence between ritual acts and occurrences in the realm of the unseen. The above motivation is given also in § 16 for the omitting of the *vidhṛtis* between *barhis* and *prastara*. On this occasion the *vidhṛtis* obviously have no function, because, I suppose, the deceased need no longer be separated from those represented by the *barhis*.

After undoing the band of the bundle the officiant moves three times<sup>58</sup> round the *vedi* (ĀpŚ. 8, 14, 4) from right to left (*prasavyam*, customary in *rebus infaustis*)<sup>59</sup> spreading the ritual grass (ŚB. 2, 6, 1, 15; KŚ. 5, 8, 29 f.)<sup>60</sup>; then having reserved as much grass as may serve for the *prastara* (cf. BhŚ. 8, 17, 21 f.; ĀpŚ. 8, 14, 6; VaikhŚ. 9, 5: 94, 6) he moves three times round in the opposite direction (*pradakṣiṇam*, usual in *rebus faustis*). Whereas the first circumambulation is an eliminatory rite, the second is beneficial and executed for self-protection.

In contrast to the injunction that the *adhvaryu* performing an *iṣṭi* after having urged the *hotar* to recite the *sūktavāka* should take the *prastara* – which means: he takes the patron to the world of the gods (ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 11) – this ritual act is omitted at the corresponding moment when the *mahāpitryajña* is performed (2, 6, 1, 45). No doubt because it is felt to be a senseless superfluity. For the same reason the order "throw it after" – in 1, 8, 3, 19 (KŚ. 3, 6, 14) obeyed by the *adhvaryu* who throws a stalk after the *prastara* – is it is true pronounced by the *āgnīdhra*, but nothing is thrown after (§ 46); the *adhvaryu* touches himself without a mantra (*tūṣṇim evātmānam upasṛṣati*; see also KŚ. 5, 9, 29 f.): the mantra can be omitted because he has not approached the fire. Thus the manual rite is observed, although there is no mantra power to be infused. If the officiant chooses to throw a substitute for the *prastara*

55. I refer to Gonda, *Āyatana*, in *Adyar Libr. Bull.* 33 (1969), p. 48 ff. (= S.S. 11, p. 225 ff.).

56. Otherwise Caland, *Śr. Āpast.* II, p. 46.

57. Cf. Homer, *Odyssey* 12, 22; 350.

58. The explanation provided by TB. 1, 6, 8, 7 ("because the Fathers abide in the third world from here") is no doubt a secondary one.

59. See Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 58 f.; 61 etc.

60. For particulars see Eggeling, *Śat. Br.* I, p. 425.



after the performance of the *patnīsamyājas* (see above), he touches himself (after throwing the stalk used for this purpose without a mantra into the fire) with the prayer to Agni (“guard mine eye”) VS. 2, 16 f.); according to ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 17 he thus avoids throwing himself into the fire after the *prastara*. – Towards the end of the *varuṇapraghāsa* both the *adhvaryu* and his assistant, the *pratiprasthātar*, throw a stalk which they have taken from the *prastara* into the fire and touch themselves after the *hotar* has intoned the *sūktavāka* (ŚB. 2, 5, 2, 42 f.; see also ŚBK. 1, 5, 1, 37 *ubhāv evemau prastarāv ādadāte anuprahṛīya prastarau tṛṇe apagṛhyopāsate*).

When Soma is hospitably received, the *prastara* for the *ātithyeṣṭi* should consist of *aśvavāla* (saccharum spontaneum, BhŚ. 10, 21, 2; ĀpŚ. 10, 30, 3). This custom is explained in KS. 24, 8: 99, 11: Prajāpati was as it were a horse; his tail was *aśvavāla* (this word literally means “hair from the tail of a horse”); ... the gods went to the heavenly world after having taken hold of this (horse); (by means of this *prastara*) the sacrificer takes hold of Prajāpati in order to reach the world of heaven”. See also KapŚ. 38, 1: 205, 7; TS. 6, 2, 1, 5; MS. 3, 7, 9: 89, 16 (*aśvavārah prastarah*). Another explanation is (in connexion with the same rite) found in ŚB. 3, 4, 1, 17: when the sacrifice, escaping from the gods, became a horse, they took hold of its tail (*vāla*) and tore it out. They threw it down in a lump; it became the *aśvavāla* grass. “Now the *ātithyeṣṭi* is the head (forepart, *śiras*) of the (*soma*) sacrifice, and the tail the hind-part (of animals): hence by a *prastara* of *aśvavāla* he encompasses (i.e. fences round, takes possession of) the sacrifice on both sides”<sup>61</sup>. See also ŚB. 3, 6, 3, 10 and 14 on the ritual procedure. It is in all probability this *prastara* which is meant in ĀpŚ. 11, 16, 4: on the occasion of the animal sacrifice for Agni and Soma<sup>62</sup> the officiant ties together the grass that has been used for the *ātithyeṣṭi* with that employed at the *agnisomīya* sacrifice; see also KŚ. 8, 6, 28 “there should be no taking of a *prastara*” (*somasya prayojanābhāvāt*, comm.); ŚB. 3, 6, 3, 4.

The author of ŚB. 3, 4, 3, 22 describing the concluding rite of the so-called intermediate consecration (*soma* ceremony) wants the *adhvaryu* to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds. The *prastara* (used for the guest-offering, comm.) which should be burnt is not thrown into the fire but held quite close over it – “thereby it is for him as if it were really thrown into the fire” – “because (the sacrificer) is to perform (rites) with it during the days that follow”. It is handed to the *agnīdh*, who puts it in a safe place.

At the end of a discussion of the *upasads* – the rites that take place between the consecration (*dīkṣā*) and the pressing of the *soma*, which have the same *barhis* (AiB. 1, 25, 1) or *prastara* (BhŚ. 12, 2, 8; ĀpŚ. 11, 2, 11) as the *ātithyeṣṭi*<sup>63</sup> – AiB. 1, 26 quotes authorities who consider the offering of ghee in the neighbourhood of Soma the king a cruel thing, because Indra slew Vṛtra by means of ghee as a thunderbolt; in that they thereupon make the *soma* to swell they cause, it is true, the king to grow, but they cause also the cruel deed to swell (*yad evāsya tat krūram ivānte caranti tad evā-*

61. On the *aśvavāla* see also ch. X D, n. 104.

62. See Caland and Henry, L’agnīstoma, p. 109.

63. See also ĀpŚ. 18, 2, 20: the same *prastara* is used at the *samst* oblations.

*syaitenāpyāyanti*, § 4)<sup>64</sup>. That is why a rite of atonement (*nihnavanam*)<sup>65</sup> is the necessary consequence. Since Soma the king is the embryo (*garbha*) of heaven and earth they pay homage to heaven and earth and make their amends on the *prastara* (*prastare nihnavate*, § 5), paying homage to heaven and earth and making them swell. That is to say, after having touched water they place their hands on the *prastara* so that the palms are turned upwards (ĀśvŚ. 4, 5, 7; more precisely, so that the palms of the right hands are turned upwards and those of the left hands turned downwards, ŚŚ. 5, 8, 5; 5, 10, 36; ĀpŚ. 11, 1, 12 adding that the *prastara*, which has been used on the occasion of the reception of the soma stalks (*ātithyeṣṭi*), has been placed on the south side of the *vedi*). As Caland no doubt rightly observed, the position of the hands ‘symbolizes’ the relation between heaven and earth which are being invoked. Another motive for the atonement on the *prastara* (*prastare nihnuvate*) is provided in ŚB. 3, 4, 3, 19 following after the swelling of the *soma*: although the sacrifice requires a northward attendance, they cause the *soma* to swell after going, as it were, towards the south – in the direction of Soma’s throne – and, since the sacrifice is the fire, they turn their back on the sacrifice and do wrong, being cut off from the gods. Because the *prastara* is also (part of) the sacrifice, they again get hold of it and expiate the wrong by touching it. – Whereas the priests who performed the *agnicayana* ritual in 1975 understood this rite as a salutation of the earth<sup>66</sup>, Brough<sup>67</sup> was of the opinion that the placing of the hands on the *prastara* bundle originally might have expressed the “hiding” of the movement in the inauspicious southern direction.

The *darbhamuṣṭi* (MŚ. 2, 3, 6, 4) or *barhirmuṣṭi* (ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 4) which the *adhvaryu* holds in his hand on the occasion of the *bahiṣpavamāna* ceremony<sup>68</sup> is in the texts of the *chandogas* (Sāmaveda) said to be a *prastara* (PB. 6, 7, 16 f.: “the *adhvaryu* bears the *prastara*, which represents the sacrificer; he thereby bears the sacrificer to the world of heaven”<sup>69</sup>). This term is also applied to the grass, when this functionary initiating the chant hands it to the *prastotar* (the first assistant of the *udgātar*) who has to begin the chanting in ĀpŚ. 12, 17, 7. Here the handing over is a sign of authorization and the *prastara* may be supposed to protect the chanter during the discharge of his duty<sup>70</sup>. However, he has to put it down on the ground before he begins

64. The comm., observing that the causing to swell consists in sprinkling with water, explains the verb by “they appease” (*samayanti*); hence “they make whole” (A.B. Keith, *Rigveda Brahmanas*, Cambridge Mass. 1920, p. 127. But compare TS. 6, 2, 2, 4 ff. “the gods having made the ghee a weapon smote Soma; now they come near Soma as it were, when they perform the *tanūnaptra* (i.e. the rite that precedes the swelling rite) ... They who cause the *soma* to swell fall away from this world, for the *soma* when made to swell has the intermediate space as its deity”.

65. See Caland and Henry, *L’agniṣṭoma*, p. 63 f.; for particulars concerning the hands, p. 64, n. 48, 8, and Caland, Śr. Āpast. II, p. 194. As to the meaning of the term *nihnava* see J. Brough, in *Siddheshwar Varma Comm. Vol. 1*, p. 126 ff. (not mentioned in Mayrhofer, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, II, p. 613 f. translating “Leugnung”).

66. See Staal, *Agni*, p. 359 f. with plate 56 on p. 367.

67. Brough, l. cit.

68. Caland and Henry, *L’agniṣṭoma*, p. 171 (with n. 13). Cf. also ŚB. 4, 2, 5, 6; Eggeling, Śat. Br. II, p. 311 f.

69. The movement is equal to an ascension to heaven, cf. PB. 6, 7, 10.

70. For other particulars see ch. III, p. 45.

to chant, to prevent the sacrificial matter (*havis*) – which obviously is to be deposited on it (cf., e.g., ŚB. 1, 3, 4, 14) – from being spilt (PB. § 21). According to LŚ. 1, 12, 2 and DŚ. 3, 4, 17 the *udgātar* should stroke his right shank with the *prastara* bunch and thereupon “yoke” (i.e. start, initiate) the *stoma* with the formula PB. 1, 3, 5 “with Agni’s fiery energy, with Indra’s characteristic (physical and psychical) power, with Sūrya’s luminous energy let Bṛhaspati “yoke” thee for the gods ...” See also LŚ. 2, 5, 20; DŚ. 5, 1, 25. The reference to the right leg is, I think, significant: because it is believed that from a man’s right side his seed is discharged (PB. 8, 7, 8 ff.); fire must be churned on the right thigh of the *udgātar* (PB. 12, 10, 12). See also ŚB. 6, 4, 2, 10<sup>71</sup>. – The term *prastara* is in the same context also used in VādhS. 4, 26 b: 129 the *adhvaryavaḥ* approach so to say stealthily bending forward, running with the *prastara*<sup>72</sup>.

In connexion with the destruction of the *prastara* at the end of a sacrifice attention may be drawn to TS. 6, 3, 4, 9: “When the *soma* ceremony was complete, the gods cast (*pra* ... *aharan*) the offering spoons and the post into the fire; they thought, ‘Here we are making a disturbance of the sacrifice’. They saw a ransom in the *prastara* for the spoons, in the chip (of the post, *svaru*) for the post. When the *soma* ceremony is complete, he casts the *prastara* into the fire, he offers (*juhoti*) the *svaru*, to avoid disturbing the sacrifice”. From a practical point of view the spoons and the post are more essential requisites than the *prastara* and the chip. Compare also MS. 3, 9, 4: 119, 13 “formerly one used, when the sacrifice was completed, to throw the post into the fire, the gods ... considered this a disturbance of the sacrifice and said, ‘By means of the encircling sticks the spoons should be bidden god-speed (*svagākr̥tāḥ*, cf. e.g. TS. 3, 5, 5, 3), by means of the chip the post, by means of the *prastara* the *sadas* (“shed”)<sup>73</sup>; this is their cry of (wishing) god-speed”. And see also the passage KS. 26, 6: 129, 15; KapS. 41, 4: 239, 23.

In one of the stanzas that belong to the ten libations made after the offering of groats (*agnicayana* ceremonies, cf. e.g., ĀpŚ. 17, 23, 11) Agni is requested to “bear this sacrifice for us to go to heaven to stay with the gods” together with the *prastara*, the *paridhi* (singular), the offering ladle (*sruc*), the *vedi*, the *barhis* and the *ṛc* (the mantras), that is with all essential things requisite for Agni’s task (TS. 5, 7, 7, 2 e<sup>74</sup>; KS. 40, 13: 148, 3; VS. 18, 63) or “with these manifestations of our sacrificial worship (*etair no yajñasya rūpaiḥ*) make it go to the heavenly world” (ŚB. 9, 5, 1, 48). Mahīdhara, on VS., 1.c. explains *prastareṇa* by *srugādhārābhūtena darbhamaṣṭinā* and *barhiṣā* by *darbhāpūlakena*.

The man who prepares for a combat and wishes to win the day should offer an oblation to Brahmaṇaspati on a spot where the roofs (of the houses of the enemies) can be seen (MS. 2, 2, 3: 17, 9; “when the armies are seen by each other”; MŚ. 5, 1, 9, 16)<sup>75</sup>. The *prastara* should be *udbarhis*, which I would take to mean “project-

71. See H. Oertel, in JAOS 26, p. 188; R.B. Onians, The origins of European thought, Cambridge 1954, Index s.v.

72. See Caland, in Acta Or. Lugd. 6, p. 129.

73. My guess; the text reads *sādā iti*.

74. See also Staal, Agni, p. 687.

75. Caland, Wunschofer, p. 74 f. (no 104).

ing over the edge of the *barhis*”, which seems to suit the context best<sup>76</sup> (cf. ĀpŚ. 2, 9, 14): there follows: “the enclosing sticks should be arrows ...”.

In MS. 1, 7, 5, 10 it is stated that for the offering of rice milk to the Maruts called the Householders (*gṛhamedhinah*, cf. ŚB. 1, 5, 3, 4; 9; 14; 11, 5, 2, 4), the firewood and the *barhis* are tied together, but not the *prastara* and the enclosing sticks. *Gṛhamedhin* is the term applied to one who regularly performs the five daily domestic sacrifices (*mahūyajña*); for *gṛhamedhins* who do not sacrifice (*ayajvān*) see TB. 1, 6, 9, 6.

The use of *paridhis* – on which the opinions of the authorities are divided<sup>77</sup> – and of a *prastara* is rarely mentioned in the domestic manuals.

In ĀpG. 7, 13 we find a reference to the *śrauta* ritual. When the newly-married husband has shown the polar star and the star Arundhatī to his wife<sup>78</sup> and they have prepared and performed a sacrifice, he anoints a part of the *barhis* in the way prescribed (in the *śrauta* ritual, viz. ĀpŚ. 3, 5, 9 ff.) for the *prastara* and throws that into the fire. See also BG. 1, 4, 36 (*atha paristarāt samullipyāyasthālyām prastaravad barhir aktvā tṛṇam pracchādyāgnāv anupraharati*).

After having set forth the procedure of a domestic sacrifice the author of JG. 1, 4: 4, 1 passes on to the performer’s task after the making of the oblations and so on. Then the performer has to take the *prastara* together with the *pavitre*, to anoint the points of the former object three times in the *śruva* (a small wooden sacrificial ladle) whilst co-ordinating its points, middle part and roots with sky, intermediate region and earth, to tear a grass stalk (*tṛṇa*) from it with “for a complete term of life thee”, to throw the *prastara* into the fire with “for Agni, for Anumati (Consent) thee”, and the grass stalk after it with “surrender my hater (enemy) and burn him”.

Dealing with the general rules of the domestic sacrifices the author of JG. 1, 1: 2, 4 states that the performer should take a *prastara* and strew that round his fire at every quarter of the sky beginning in the southeast and covering the roots of one layer with the tips of the next. In this connexion other authorities – e.g. BGŚ. 1, 6, 2 speak of *darbha* grasses. – Sometimes the two equal blades of *darbha* with unbroken points of one span’s length that were to be used as strainers or purifiers (*pavitre*) were not taken from the *barhis* (MG. 2, 2, 2) but from the *prastara* (JG. 1, 2: 2, 7).

Describing a *bali* offering made to Yama or Antaka (Death) the author of BGŚ. 1, 21 orders the householder who is desirous of mental power, property, or (a) son(s) to leave the village, with the oblation, in the eastern or northern direction and to make on a suitable place a *vedī* of clay or sand as well as an *uttaravedī*. After having dug a hole on the south side and established a fire on the north side he covers the *uttaravedī* with *darbhāḥ* and puts down a handful of grass (*viṣṭara*) and a *prastara*;

76. Compare *udbila* “emerged from its hole (of an animal)”; *udajina* “one who has passed beyond a skin”; *udanta* “running or flowing over the end or border”. Monier-Williams, Dict., following the Petersburg Dict. translates “having sacrificial grass above”; Caland, op. cit., p. 75 (cf. n. 221) hesitatingly “sollen die Spitzen nach oben gerichtet sein”; van Gelder (MS., Transl., p. 151) “the *prastara* (is taken) from the sacrificial grass”.

77. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 174; cf. p. 350 f.

78. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 393.

thereupon he invokes Yama, requesting the god to sit down on the *barhis* and, in another mantra, to sit down on the *prastara*, addressing three mantras, all told, over the *prastara* and offers, holding sacred grass (*pavitra*) in his hand, the god water and so on.

In a partly corrupt concluding stanza of a text that deals with the *ghṛtakambala* ceremony<sup>79</sup> which enables the performer to realize all his wishes and to obtain prosperity (AVPar. 33, 7, 7) the advice is given to perform this ritual and five other ceremonies as a great means of appeasement of evil (*mahāsānti*). It requires six *prastaras*; obviously in each of the six ceremonies another one.

Occasionally the term *prastara* is found in another context. In a section on impurity caused by contact with a deceased relative VāsDh. 4, 14 enjoins those who have returned home after the cremation to sit during three days on a *prastara*, fasting. Bühler<sup>80</sup> translated "on mats". In the parallel passage ViSm. 19, 16 they are ordered to lie (sleep) on the *sthaṇḍila*, i.e. an open, otherwise unoccupied piece of level or levelled ground, especially when prepared for sacrificial purposes<sup>81</sup>. According to Yājñ. 3, 16 and Manu 5, 73 they should sleep on the ground. The purpose of this rite no doubt is purification and appeasement of evil or induction of fresh power<sup>82</sup>.

79. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 177 f.

80. G. Bühler, Sacred Laws of the Aryas, II, S.B.E. 14, Oxford 1882 (reprint Delhi 1969), p. 28.

81. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 231 f.

82. On fasting see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 320 ff. etc.



## XII

### Veda

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The *veda* is one of the most remarkable sacrificial utensils. The traditional translation “broom” is inadequate and in more than one respect even misleading, because most of its functions are not proper to implements for sweeping, notwithstanding the fact that a *veda* consists of a bundle of blades of grass and many brooms are made of twigs. Its generally pragmatic functions do not detract from its being simultaneously a vehicle for a ritual conception which, as such, is at least in our eyes characterized by a certain vagueness<sup>1</sup>, and from being a bearer of power which must be activated in order to perform a rite correctly and successfully. In some respects it may therefore rather create the impression of being a sort of magic wand<sup>2</sup> held by an officiant engaged in the execution of a particular ritual task. Not always by the same officiant and even by the sacrificer’s wife when she is made to recite a mantra<sup>3</sup>.

On the preparation of the *veda* – on the day before the day of the chief offerings (ritual of full and new moon) – we get information<sup>4</sup> from BhŚ. 1, 6, 4: the *adhvaryu* prepares it of blades of *darbha* with the mantra “thou art the *veda*, mayest thou, O god, become the *veda* for me through that through which thou becamest the *veda* for the gods”. By means of these words, which (as VS. 2, 21) in ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 23 (see also ŚŚ. 1, 15, 12) are uttered in another context<sup>5</sup>, the officiant confirmatively declares the object under preparation to be a *veda* – from this moment it *is* a *veda* – and expresses the wish that it may conform to its divine prototype. ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 4 prescribes a different mantra, viz. TB. 3, 7, 4, 12 “through thee they (the gods) have acquired the earth as *vedi*; through thee sacrificial ritual (*yajña*) which gives everything comes into existence; thou dost knowingly accompany the uninter-

1. Compare, e.g., F.K. Lehman, Symbols and the computation of meaning in D.B. Shimkin *et alii*, Anthropology for the future, Univ. of Illinois 1978.
2. A bearer of the power of a living tree enabling its possessor to work wonders (see, e.g., F. Heiler, Erscheinungsformen und Wesen der Religion, Stuttgart 1961, p. 98 f.). In this connexion Krick, Feuergründung, p. 110 reminds the reader of a fecundating magic wand of a creator god represented as a potter.
3. As to the *parivāsana* (see M. Haug, The Aitareya Brahmanam ... translated, Bombay 1863, II, p. 79, quoted by Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 84, n. 2, quoted by Keith, Veda Bl. Yajus School, p. 12, n. 4) compare Caland, on ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 8.
4. For other details see J. Schwab, Das altindische Thieropfer, Erlangen 1886, p. 11. Mahīdhara, on VS. 2, 21 defines the *veda* as follows: “an object made of a handful of *kuśa* grass”.
5. See below.

rupted (undamaged) sacrifice; through thee the *hotar* joins the fortnights together". The references to the *vedi* and the *hotar's* activity will be discussed below; from the contents of the second and third quarters there emerges a striking idea: without a *veda* there is no sacrifice and no uninterrupted sacrificial worship. In harmony with this idea the form given to the *veda* is believed to be decisive in gaining particular objects or advantages: if the sacrificer is desirous of cattle, the *adhvaryu* should prepare a *veda* of the shape of the knee of a calf (that is sitting down); if he is desirous of food, one of the shape of a basket (for food) and so on (BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 14; 20, 3: 9, 8; BhŚ. 5 f.; ĀpŚ. 5). – See also ĀpŚ. 8, 5, 4 (*varuṇapraghāsa*) and for some details MŚ. 1, 1, 3, 1 ff. ("he twists tufts of grass to the left (so that they become) directed from the south towards the north; he puts a cord on the tufts, winds it three times to the right (so that the windings lie) one above the other, then ties it"); VārŚ. 1, 2, 2, 1 f. he throws the roots on the rubbish heap (*utkara*, MŚ. 2), but preserves the ends (1, 2, 5, 2). The *āgnīdhra*, who is seated there, encloses the *utkara* with the chaff (of the rice) and these roots with his arms (see also ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 8; BhŚ. 2, 1, 11), no doubt to prevent those present from disturbing it<sup>6</sup>.

The term is found in the Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā. In AVŚ. 7, 28, 1 (AVP. 20, 30, 4) it is declared to be *svasti* "well-being". From the context, which is not clear, it may be inferred that here also it is an "instrument of offering": mention is made of the *vedi* and of oblations. The stanza is used in Vait. 4, 12, dealing with the rites of full and new moon, when the *hotar* unties the *veda* (notice that here this is a concern of the *hotar*; in KŚ. 3, 8, 1 it is the patron's wife who performs this rite) and in 13, 2, dealing with the *prāyaṇīya-iṣṭi*<sup>7</sup> (*soma* ceremony), to accompany an oblation offered to Agni. In st. 3 of the largely corrupt AVP. 20, 23 the *veda* is described as *saṃvananaḥ*, i.e. "propitiating, making well-disposed", which in any case attests to a certain appreciation of the instrument's ritual utility<sup>9</sup>.

When the *adhvaryu* performing the *varuṇapraghāsa* ritual has taken a log of wood and ordered the *hotar* to recite to Agni (the fire) as he (it) is being kindled (TS. 6, 3, 7, 1; ŚB. 1, 3, 5, 2 etc.), this officiant and the *pratiprasthātar* should each put on a piece of fuel, each leave as remainders a log of firewood and each fan (in flame) the fire with his *veda* (BŚ. 5, 7: 136, 12). Although the *veda* probably is of all utensils at their disposal most suited for this purpose, its ritual significance was no doubt supposed to make it more effective. In any case, this undertaking also was to be promoted by ritual activity or to be surrounded with some degree of ritual protection.

A similar observation may be made in connexion with BŚ. 9, 5: 272, 4 stating that, when the two *mahāvira* pots which are held in reserve are placed on the skin of a black antelope with the mantra "O god, who makest preparations (art the guide), may I be able to carry thee" (BhŚ. 11, 6, 8; ĀpŚ. 15, 6, 11), the officiant should execute this task by means of (by holding and enclosing them with) two *vedas*

6. References to "enclosures" are frequent: ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 12 f; 3, 3, 1, 5; 8, 4, 4, 7 etc.

7. See Whitney and Lanman, Atharva-veda Saṃhitā, p. 407.

8. See Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 28 f.

9. AVP. 16, 52, 3 is corrupt.

which are laid on their sides with their openings facing east<sup>10</sup>. See also BŚ. 9, 15: 286, 15.

The compound *vedopayāma* “using the *veda* as an *upayāma*”<sup>11</sup>, “holding or putting a *veda* under something (vessel, ladle etc.) to support it, reach forth or offer its contents etc.” is often found in MŚ.: 1, 2, 3, 13 “with the spoon he takes from the *praṇīta* water (cf., e.g., ŚB. 1, 1, 1, 18; BhŚ. 1, 25, 4 below) supporting it with the *veda* (*vedopayāmaḥ sruveṇa ... āharati*)”; 24 the gheepot is supported with the *veda*; also 1, 2, 6, 18; at 1, 3, 5, 1 ghee is cut off from the ladle; 1, 8, 5, 10 when ghee is taken in the spoon; 1, 3, 1, 5; at 1, 2, 5, 12 one touches water supporting it with the *veda*. This is a special precautionary measure in case some of the contents might be spilt<sup>12</sup> (see below). For this practice compare also TB. 3, 3, 7, 3 “holding the *veda* under (the *sruva*) (the *adhvaryu*) makes the (first) libation of butter” (*vedenopayatyā sruveṇa ...*); BhŚ. 1, 25, 4 *sruveṇa praṇītabhya ādāya vedenopayamyāharati* and ĀpŚ. 1, 24, 5<sup>13</sup>; BhŚ. 2, 12, 4 and ĀpŚ. 2, 12, 7. It would seem that the *veda* was, on the one hand, somewhat easier in operation than other bundles of grass and, on the other hand, regarded as more intrinsically powerful.

In this connexion mention must be made of TB. 3, 3, 8, 9 “(the *adhvaryu*) carries around (the *āhavanīya* fire) to the *brahman* the *brahman*’s share by means of (on) the *veda* (*vedena ... pariharati*; the author adds that both *brahmān* and *veda* are of Prajāpati’s nature (see below)). Attention must be drawn also to KŚ. 1, 10, 6, with the commentary: “(One should perform) the act of holding under with the *veda* (*vedanopagrahaṇam*, i.e. supporting, comm.), i.e. one should take the *veda* (in the left hand) under a single object (spoon, gheepot) containing the clarified butter (when one is lifting it up with the right hand)”: “(this is done) in order to prevent the ghee in the object held in the right hand from spirting out as a result of trembling of the hand and so on” (comm.).

According to BhŚ. 3, 7, 8 the *adhvaryu* should in making the *patnīsamyāja* offerings use the *veda* in place of the *upabhr̥t*, the offering spoon made of *aśvattha* wood<sup>14</sup>, which he usually holds in his left hand under the *juhū* with which his right hand offers the libation: the use of the *veda* is a striking feature of these offerings. See also ĀpŚ. 3, 8, 7<sup>15</sup>.

When at a given moment the *pratiprasthātar* (the first assistant of the *adhvaryu*) had seized the *mahāvīra* kettle, he wipes off the ashes (from its bottom) by means of a *veda* the ends (tops) of which have been cut off (*vedena parivāsītena*, BhŚ. 11, 10, 2; ĀpŚ. 15, 10, 6; cf. 15, 5, 19). Remember that the tops of grass stalks are sacred

10. See van Buitenen, The *Pravargya*, p. 70. For these *vedas* made of *kuśa* and one of *muñja* see BŚ. 9, 5: 271, 6.

11. Cf., e.g., ŚB. 4, 1, 2, 6 ff.; MŚ. 4, 2, 2; ĀpŚ. 15, 10, 6; 15, 11, 2; 9 and cf. ŚB. 14, 2, 1, 17; 14, 2, 2, 40.

12. Cf. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 293.

13. Compare also the use of an *upayamana* (supporting ladle) with which the hot *mahāvīra* kettle is supported (BŚ. 9, 10: 278, 16; BhŚ. 11, 10, 2; cf. MŚ. 4, 3, 18; KŚ. 26, 5 *pravargya*).

14. See, e.g., Eggeling, Śat. Br. I, p. 67 f.

15. With Caland’s note, Śr. Āpast. I, p. 86. Hence the formula *upayāmagr̥hīto ’si*, e.g., ĀpŚ. 12, 27, 8; Eggeling, Śat. Br. II, p. 259 f.

to the gods (ŚB. 9, 2, 1, 12) and should not therefore be used for wiping off ashes. For this purpose the Vājasaneyins (KŚ. 26, 5, 15; ŚB. 14, 2, 1, 16) and other authorities (BhŚ. 11, 5, 21; ĀpŚ. 15, 5, 18) prescribe the use of a *veda* consisting of *muñja*, the coarse and stronger sedge-like saccharum sara: see TĀ. 5, 4, 4 “as to the *pravargya*, *muñja* is strength (vigour, *ūrj*)<sup>16</sup>; since the *veda* consists of *muñja*, he causes the head of the sacrifice (i.e. the *pravargya*, see ŚB. 3, 4, 4, 1) to be abundantly furnished with *ūrj*”. The *veda* is also employed to cover the pieces of pottery on which the sacrificial cakes are to be baked with embers (in order to heat them, ĀpŚ. 1, 23, 6) and to push or put ashes with embers (*sāṅgāraṃ bhasmādhyūhati* BhŚ. 1, 26, 9; ĀpŚ. 1, 25, 12; TS. 2, 6, 3, 4) on these cakes.

Among the objects required for an *iṣṭi* are a *veda* and *vedaparavāḥ* “small fragments or chips of the *veda*” (VārŚ. 1, 2, 4, 4) which are used for cleansing the large wooden sacrificial ladles (*sruca*, 1, 3, 2, 12), the whole *veda* being no doubt too big or too long for this purpose: see also MŚ. 1, 2, 5, 2 “he divides the cuttings of the *veda* or does not divide them, then wipes the ladles obliquely (with them) towards the lip; with the tips he wipes the ends, with the undersides the handles ...” (notice the exact correspondence between ladle and instrument); they are also mentioned at MŚ. 4, 2, 6 (*pravargya*); from these cuttings or from *darbha* one makes strainers (4, 2, 7); with these cuttings one also heats the *mahāvīra* pot after having kindled them on every end (*viṣvagrān*) with “thou art the flame, the beam ...” (4, 2, 17).

Another instrument for cleansing a spoon (*sruva*) consists of the ends or tops (*agrāṇi*) of the *veda* (KŚ. 2, 6, 46 from the bottom to the top; cf. ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 21). According to BhŚ. 1, 6, 7 ff. and ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 6 the *adhvaryu* should cut (*parivāsayati*) the *veda* at a distance of a span (from the base; according to some authorities from the cord tied to it) and deposit the ends (*vedāgrāṇi*) markedly; hence *vedaparivāsanāni*, ĀpŚ. 6; BŚ. 1, 4: 6, 7 (in an enumeration); 1, 12: 16, 8; 20, 10: 22, 7 (cf. Dhūrtasvāmin on Āp.: *vedaparivāsanāni: sarvāny eva vedāgrāṇi*). From these detailed directions it appears that even these cuttings were not regarded as being insignificant. They are used at a later moment (BhŚ. 2, 4, 3; ĀpŚ. 2, 4, 2); they are either distributed in accordance with the number of the utensils to be cleansed or not distributed: another minute detail that could give rise to a controversy. (See also VaikhŚ. 3, 5: 36, 8 *parivāsanāni vedāgrāṇi ... nidadhāti*; 5, 2: 53, 10; 13). ŚB. 1, 3, 1, 11 disapproves of the practice of throwing these grass-ends into the *āhavanīya* fire – as is done in TB. 3, 3, 2, 1 with the mantra “... we destroy the rival” – because they belong to the sacrifice; thus, it is argued, one offers the slops of the vessels, no sacrificial food. According to TB. 3, 3, 2, 2 f. one should not throw them away at random lest cattle should, to the detriment of their well-being, tread upon them; one should purify them with water (i.e. appease them, avert the evil) and throw them on the heap of rubbish (*utkara*) which is their firm foundation (*pratiṣṭhā*)<sup>17</sup>.

16. Because it is fit for cattle-fodder (comm. on TĀ., p. 415 B.I.).

17. Among the requisites for the animal sacrifice enumerated in the late VaikhŚ. 10, 7: 106, 17 is a *vedasamavattadhānī*, a compound which I have not found elsewhere. It must denote a vessel which contains or is to contain the gathered fragments of the *veda*. In ŚB. 3, 8, 3, 13; 25; 12, 5, 2, 7 a similar vessel is used for holding the cuttings of the *idā*.

When during the rites of full and new moon a cake is removed from the fire it is put above the ashes by means of the *veda*, but one should not touch it with the hand or with the top of the *veda* (*vedaśiras*, MŚ. 1, 2, 6, 21). The preparation of the sacrificial cakes is a meticulous process (see, e.g., ŚB. 1, 2, 2, 1 ff.) and any form of contact can transfer influence either for good or for evil; notice however that the hand of the officiant and *vedaśiras* are in this respect considered equivalent. For the *vedaśiras* as an efficacious ritual instrument see ĀśvŚ. 1, 11, 2 (*patnīsamīyā* ritual): if the sacrificer wishes to obtain offspring, he should touch the region of her navel with it<sup>18</sup>.

If the officiant performing the *patnīsamīyā* sacrifices wishes to use a substitute for the *prastara*<sup>19</sup>, he should pluck one stalk (*trṇam*) from the *veda* and anoint its top, middle part and lower end in the *juhū*, the *śruva* and the gheepot respectively, that is, in the same manner as he does in the case of the *prastara* for which see BhŚ. 3, 9, 2; ĀpŚ. 3, 14, 7 (KŚ. 3, 7, 14; ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 16; as to the anointing of the *prastara* see 3, 4, 3, 20). The *āgnīdhra* then requests the *adhvaryu* to throw the *vedatrṇa* into the *gārhapatya* fire (KŚ. 3, 7, 15; ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 17); the *adhvaryu* does this without a mantra (cf. KŚ. 3, 6, 15 and ŚB. 1, 8, 3, 19).

We should not be surprised to read that the *veda* is, in some way or other, homologized to hair. In MS. 4, 1, 9: 11, 16 “the sacrificial cake is the head of the sacrifice or its brain, the *veda* (its) hair”; see also KS. 31, 7: 8, 15; KapS. 47, 7: 290, 4 and compare TB. 3, 2, 8, 7 f.: “If (the *adhvaryu*) should not cover (the cake), the brain would be visible. He covers it; hence the brain is hidden. He covers it with ashes; that is why the bone (of the head) is covered with flesh. He covers (the cake) by means of the *veda*; that is why the head is covered with hair” (also TS. 2, 6, 3, 4 f.). – Enumerating a number of “identifications” of elements of the sacrificial ritual with the human body – “the sacrificer is its *ātman* “self, person”, the wife the *śraddhā* “the performer’s belief in the effectiveness of the rites . . .” – TĀ. 10, 64, 1 declares the *barhīs* and the *veda* to be the hair (the former the hair on the body)<sup>20</sup>. But although the outward appearance of blades of grass may in some respects remind us of hair, the hair of a man’s head forms the highest part of his body and identification with it can easily stamp an object as something excellent or important.

When a deceased sacrificer is to be cremated his sacrificial utensils should be piled upon his body (see, e.g., BhPit. 1, 5, 16 ff.), the *veda* on the hair on the crown of his head (*śikhā*, 1, 6, 17; also ĀgnG. 3, 4, 2: 136, 15). The *śikhā* is no doubt a place of honour: when, in TB. 2, 6, 4, 5 f., the bull had become Indra’s bodily form and the hairs of the wolf and the tiger the hair on his body and his beard, the hairs of the lion, which are splendour and the energies of the physical and psychical faculties, became the hair of his head for glory and *śrī* (welfare and beauty). The addition of *kūrcaṃ* in VaikhG. 5, 4: 76, 9 (*vedaṃ kūrcaṃ cūḍīkāyām* “the *vedabundle* on his top-knot”, Caland) is capable of more than one interpretation<sup>21</sup>. – If the one

18. For the navel as the source of creation see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 86 f.

19. See ch. XI.

20. As to Prajāpati’s beard (TB. 3, 3, 9, 11) see below.

21. See ch. XIII.



who has performed the *pravargya* ritual wishes to arrange the utensils in the shape of a human figure, he should place the three *mahāvīra* pots in the same place so as to form a man's head and above this head put the unclipped *veda* made of *muñja* so as to represent the hair tuft (BhŚ. 11, 15, 1 f.; ĀpŚ. 15, 15, 1). (The *veda* of *muñja* grass with its ends cut should be loosened and represent the muscles: BhŚ. and ĀpŚ., 1.c.; for all three *vedas* see BŚ. 9, 15: 287, 2: 9; 288, 10).

The importance of the *veda* as a ritual instrument is also evidenced by its intimate relations with Prajāpati. By the fact that the officiant fans the *āhavanīya* fire, which represents the sacrificer, with the *veda* (notice this use of the utensil: BhŚ. 2, 12, 3; ĀpŚ. 2, 12, 7), which is of Prajāpati's nature (because it had departed from this god, ŚB. 8, 1, 1, 3; see, e.g., also 6, 3, 1, 9; 7, 4, 1, 16; TB. 3, 3, 8, 9), he puts the vital breath, which was also created by Prajāpati, into the sacrificer (TB. 3, 3, 7, 2). See also TB. 3, 3, 2, 1 *prājāpatyo vedah;* 3, 3, 8, 9 (quoted above). In TB. 3, 3, 9, 11 it is declared to be Prajāpati's beard: cf. ŚB. 9, 3, 1, 4, where the plants are said to be the hair of the beard of Agni Vaiśvānara who is the universe.

The *hotar*<sup>22</sup> who is performing the *patnīsaṃyājas* – offerings to Soma, Tvaṣṭar, the Wives of the Gods and Agni Gṛhpati<sup>23</sup> – as described in KB. 3, 9 (3, 11 f.), where they are said to be a pouring of semen (3, 11, 8 f.) and ŚŚ. 1, 15 – is towards the end of the pertinent ceremonies required to untie the *veda* (which the *adhvaryu* had given to him, ĀśvŚ. 1, 10, 2; see also KŚ. 3, 6, 22; ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 1) and to loosen the cord (with which the patron's wife is girdled, ŚŚ. 1, 15, 9), to lay them in the joined hands (*añjali*) of the wife (10) and to sprinkle water (around?, *pariṣīncati*) them, whilst muttering, *inter alia*, “whereby thou, O *veda*, wert a *veda* for the gods, thereby mayest thou be a *veda* for us” (11 f.) and other mantras (see below and, e.g., also BŚ. 3, 30: 104, 4). ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 23, describing the same rite, says that the wife unties the *veda*; “should she wish to do so with this one (quoted as VS. 2, 21 a). Thereupon he causes (ŚŚ. 13) the wife of the patron to recite, over the *veda*, a prayer, addressed to that object, for increase of property, rich in ghee and forming a nest or home. The author of KB. 3, 12, 13 ff. observes that because the *veda* is male and the wife female, he thus confers *mithuna* (a productive pair, pairing, copulation) upon women (otherwise, ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 21; see below). Therefore, it is argued, the wife takes from the *veda* some blades of grass (*tṛṇāni*) and places them between her thighs. It does not seem inconceivable that the contents of the prayers pronounced by the officiant and the wife were believed to be transmitted by the grass to the wife<sup>24</sup>, who having received them in an embryonic state in her hands that are made to represent a womb, causes them so to say to develop and produces the result, viz. the wish materialized in the blades of grass, between her thighs that is, out of her womb and genitals.

22. Who here probably acts instead of the sacrificer himself. Remember that in the domestic rite the householder fulfils the place of this functionary and that in the *śrauta* rites there are several cases of an interchange of functions. See also p. 218 above.

23. I refer to Hillebrandt, *Altind. Neu- und Vollmondsopfer*, p. 151 ff.

24. For water poured into the *añjali* of the sacrificer's wife see ĀpŚ. 6, 12, 4; BhŚ. 6, 14, 3. From the mantra prescribed in ĀpŚ. 6, 12, 5 “I pour out *amṛta* to the wives of the gods, *svāhā*” it appears that she was probably supposed to represent the wives of the gods.

It is interesting to notice that in the parallel passage in ĀśvŚ. 1, 11 the *veda* is given to the sacrificer's wife who is made to address this object (§ 1, for the mantras see ŚŚ. § 12 f., and another one). If the wife is desirous of offspring, she should with the head (the broom end) of the *veda* touch her navel (§ 2; cf. MŚ. 1, 3, 5, 16 "if she is desirous of a son, she should put it on her lap"). Her girdle is loosened (§ 3); grass blades of the *veda* (*vedatrṇāni*) are laid on it (§ 4). A full vessel connected with grass blades of the *veda* is placed to the east of them (§ 5). They both touch the vessel and the wife is made to pray for fullness (§ 6). Thereupon they sprinkle water from that vessel towards the directions of the universe (§ 7). Then the officiant places the wife's *añjali* and his left hand – all three hands with the backs towards the ground – under the girdle and pours the contents of the vessel out through the hands; the wife is made to say "that I do not pour away offspring ..." (§ 8). After that the officiant takes the *vedatrṇāni* in his right hand and strews them without moving them to and fro from the *gārhapatya* to the *āhavanīya* with ṚV. 10, 53, 6 "stretching the thread", which suggests continuation (§ 9). He puts down what of them remains (§ 10), makes offerings and so on. – Returning to the Kauṣītakins I must add that thereupon the officiant strews some of the grass blades (*trṇāni*) of the *veda* uninterruptedly to the north of the *gārhapatya* hearth up to the *barhis* (of the *vedi*) with ṚV. 10, 53, 6 "stretching the thread do thou pursue the light of (the cosmic) space ..." (ŚŚ. 1, 15, 15 f.; cf. ĀśvŚ. 1, 11, 9 f.) so as to connect the place from which they are fetched and which is occupied by the patron's wife and the *vedi*<sup>25</sup>. "Thereby these full and new moon sacrifices are continued" (KB. 3, 9 or 3, 12, 19). Thereupon the remainder of the *veda* is reverently addressed with the formula "thou art abundance, completely filling; fill me with progeny and cattle": another instance of the auspicious and beneficial power ascribed to a remainder, and especially of its being a container of special productive power ensuring continuation<sup>26</sup>. "In that he pays reverence to the remnant of the *veda* (ŚŚ. § 16 f.), he utters a prayer for blessing" (KB. § 21 f.). For the first rite see also ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 24; TB. 3, 3, 9, 11, where the strewing of the stalks composing the *veda* is explained as extending (for the benefit of the sacrificer) the sacrifice as far as the following fortnight (see above); ĀpŚ. 3, 10, 5; and also BhŚ. 3, 9, 12 with another mantra, viz. "the *veda* must give increase of wealth, rich in ghee, possessed of a home, a thousandfold, and bearing (producing) (pro)creative power (*vājinam*)" (TS. 1, 6, 4, 4 y; see above). In KS. 5, 4: 47, 10 the prayer reads as follows: "The *veda* must give me (pro)creative power (*vāja*) (these words are also found in KapS. 1, 12: 9, 17; MS. 1, 4, 3: 50, 19); the *veda* must give me manly virtue and energy (*vīrya*)".

For tearing the *veda* to pieces and strewing its blades as a method of marking the conclusion of a ritual or an episode of a sacrifice see also ĀpŚ. 13, 18, 4, where it marks the end of an animal sacrifice that is one of the component parts of a *soma*

25. For the mantra see also AiB. 3, 38, 5 where the thread (*tantu*) is said to signify offspring and the officiant is weaving the *tantu* of offspring for his patron.

26. J. Gonda, Atharvaveda 11, 7, Mélanges L. Renou, Paris 1968, p. 301 ff (= S.S. III, p. 439 ff.).

ceremony<sup>27</sup>. According to some authorities the strewing takes place towards the end of an *īṣṭi*, after the sacrificer, being seated within the *vedi*, has put it on his lap (also VaikhŚ. 7, 14: 78, 8) and while he recites the mantras enumerated in ĀpŚ. 4, 14, 10 b in which Agni, Vāyu and Sūrya are besought for protection against those deities who wish to disturb the sacrifice (TS. 3, 5, 4, 3; ĀpŚ. 4, 16, 8 f.). The lap is the place where people guard anything very carefully (ŚB. 1, 1, 2, 23; cf. 6, 8, 2, 3). But a woman desirous of a son puts the *veda* on her lap (MŚ. 1, 3, 5, 16; see above). When a sacrifice is not complete, the blades of the *veda* are not strewn: see KB. 7, 3 beg.; 7, 3, 9 f.; ŚŚ. 8, 12, 9 (with reference to the component rituals of a *soma* sacrifice)<sup>28</sup>.

The name of this ritual requisite is often coupled with forms of the root *vid-* (*vin-dati*)<sup>29</sup> “to find, discover, meet, acquire, partake of, find out, come upon, look for, procure, effect, accomplish, perform etc.” so as to suggest the existence of etymological relationship. Thus the sequence of brief formulae “thou art the *veda*<sup>30</sup>; thou art acquisition (*vitti*); may I acquire (*videya*)”, used in the *patnīsaṃyājas* (see above), occurs at TS. 1, 6, 4, 4 v and is at 1, 7, 4, 6 followed by the explanation “by means of the *veda* the gods acquired (*avindanta*) the property (acquisition, *vittam*) of the *asuras* and what they were (expected) to acquire (*vedyam*<sup>31</sup>); and that is why the *veda* is called *veda*”. This mantra is used at ĀśvŚ. 1, 11, 1<sup>32</sup> and 1, 15, 12 (*videyam*). The sequence is in TS. 1, 6, 4, 4; ĀśvŚ., 1.c.; ŚŚ., 1.c. followed by 4 w “thou art deed, thou art action (*karuṇam*, *karaṇam*<sup>33</sup>), may I (be able to) act (*kriyāsam*)” and 4 x “thou art gain; thou art the one who gains; may I gain (*sanir asi sanitāsi saneyam*)” as well as 4 y “the *veda* must bestow increase of wealth ...”. See also BŚ. 3, 30: 104, 4. – In KS. 5, 4: 47, 7 a longer sequence, viz. “thou art the *veda*; thou art acquisition (*vitti*); for property (*vedase*) thee; acquire property for me (*vedo me vinda*); may I acquire (*videya*)” occurs likewise in connexion with the *veda*<sup>34</sup>. The formula “thou art the *veda*; bestow (*ābhara*) property (*vedas*) on me” (MS. 1, 4, 3: 50, 17) is MŚ. 1, 3, 5, 15 used on the same occasion and 1, 4, 1, 18, when this requisite is taken by the sacrificer. As already appeared from TS. 1, 7, 4, 6 this “etymological argument” is also a feature of mythical stories and ritual explanations which were no doubt

27. See Caland's note, Śr. Āp. II, p. 351 and J. Gonda, *The haviryajñāḥ somāḥ*, Amsterdam Acad. 1982, p. 63.

28. Whereas ŚŚ. 8, 12, 10 states that at the end of the sacrifice of the barren cow (*soma* ceremonies) the officiant strews (the blades of grass) to the east of the hearth of the *agnīdhra* and proceeds to address the heart-spit with the mantra “thou art pain, ...” (TS. 1, 3, 11, 1 c), ĀśvŚ. 3, 6, 23 says that the “strewing of the *veda*” is optional (*kṛtākṛtam vedastaraṇam*). Other texts, e.g., KŚ. 6, 10, 1 ff. do not mention this strewing.

29. For an exception see Mahīdhara, on VS. 2, 21 *vetīti vedah*.

30. I would avoid the translation “bundle” (Keith, *Veda Bl. Y. S.*, p. 88).

31. The expression *vittam vedyam* seems to be a copulative asyndeton; cf. VS. 18, 11 *vittam ca me vedyam ca me*, followed by *bhūtam ca me bhaviyac ca me*. Keith, taking *vedyam* to be an adjective, translates “desirable” (op. cit., p. 102), “precious” (p. 78, TS. 1, 5, 9, 2), “which was to be won” (p. 505; TS. 6, 2, 4, 3).

32. See above.

33. See Keith, op. cit., p. 88, n. 2.

34. In KS. 39, 5: 123, 5 the words *vittir asi vittyai tō videyam* followed by *karmāsi karmaṇe tō kriyāsam* are in another context part of a series of similar sequences.

invented or adapted afterwards, i.e. were based on it or modified by means of it. "The sacrifice hid itself from the gods; the gods discovered (*avindan*) it by means of the *veda*; that is why the *veda* is called *veda*" (cf. KS. 32, 6: 24, 16 *yajño vai devebhyo 'pakrāmata. taṃ vedena anvavindan*).

In TB. 3, 7, 6, 13 v (cf. also KS. 31, 14: 16, 12) the *veda* is said to have found the earth which was hidden in an inaccessible place, in the lowest depths, and requested to find a place to live in safety (*loka*) for the sacrificer and to make, being very busy (or, making many oblations, *bhūrikarmā*), the sacrifice free from defect. This means that the *veda* is believed to be a very mighty instrument fit to accomplish what is elsewhere ascribed to a black boar with a thousand arms (TĀ. 10, 1, 8) or to a boar who was identical with Prajāpati (ŚB. 14, 1, 2, 11). The stanza may perhaps be supposed to refer to another variant<sup>35</sup> of the mythical story told in TS. 6, 2, 4, 2: a boar kept the property of the *asuras* beyond the seven hills; Indra plucking a bunch of *darbha* pierced the hills and won that property. In BhŚ. 2, 11, 11 and ĀpŚ. 2, 11, 10 it is uttered by the *adhvaryu* when he places the *veda* in front of (or north of) the *dhruvā* (an offering spoon), no doubt in the hope that the prayer formulated in the second part will be answered. See also MŚ. 1, 2, 4, 4. This putting down of the *veda* (*vedasādanam*), which has had a pragmatic function, marks also the transition from the preliminary rites to the central or main part of the ritual which is introduced by the kindling (*sāmidhenī*) stanzas recited by the *hotar*. Likewise in the animal sacrifice: ĀpŚ. 7, 13, 12; VaikhŚ. 10, 10: 110, 9.

Now the name of the *vedī* (sacrificial bed covered with grass<sup>36</sup>) is likewise often found in the same context as forms of the verb *vid-* (*vindati*) "to find, acquire" and as a rule so as not only to suggest etymological relationship but also to demonstrate the *raison d'être* of that name. "In that they (the gods) won (*avindata*) the property (*vittam vedyam*) of the *asuras* (by plucking out *darbha* grass and so on), that alone is the reason why the *vedī* is so called" (*vedyai veditvam*, TS. 6, 2, 4, 3; cf. MS. 3, 8, 3: 96, 3; 10 ... *tad devā vedyāvindata, tad vedyā veditvam* ...; KS. 25, 6: 109, 4); "he who knows thus and for whom a *vedī* is made ... acquires (*vindate*) the property (*vittam caiva vedyam ca*) of his rival" (KS. 25, 6: 109, 5); "... they went on worshipping ... with (the sacrifice); by it they obtained (*samavindanta*) this entire earth; and ... therefore it (the *vedī*) is called *vedī*" (ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 7); "and since they (the gods) found (*anvavindan*) Viṣṇu there (viz. among the roots of the plants), it is called *vedī*" (10); AiB. 3, 9, 3 "they (the gods) found it (the sacrifice) on the *vedī*; that is why the *vedī* has its name".

In other passages both objects, *veda* and *vedī*, are not only spoken of in the same context, but also along with the verb *vid-* (*vindati*). In the sacrifices of full and new moon the formulae TS. 1, 6, 4 v etc. accompany the putting down by the sacrificer of the *veda* within the *vedī* (ĀpŚ. 4, 13, 5), or his rubbing it after having placed it there (BhŚ. 4, 19, 1). Rubbing is a method of transferring some manifestation of

35. Otherwise: Caland, Śr. Āpast. I, p. 63, on ĀpŚ. 2, 11, 10.

36. For a definition of *vedī* see ĀśvŚ. 9, 7, 13 *sādyaskeṣūrvarā vedīḥ* and Gārgya Nārāyaṇa's note: *sarvasa-syavaḥ bhūmiḥ sa vedī bhavati*.

power or form of influence or of imparting these to a person or thing<sup>37</sup>. This task is probably executed before the action mentioned in ĀpŚ. 3, 10, 3, enjoining the *hotar* to throw the *veda* in the lap of the sacrificer's wife, and intended to infuse the *veda* with fresh power. Both actions are mentioned also in ĀpŚ. 12, 25, 13 (referring to the sacrificer's touching the *veda* within the *vedi*) in a section dealing with the consumption of the remains of the *savanīya* cakes (*soma* ceremonies<sup>38</sup>), where it is explicitly characterized as a concluding rite. – According to MS. 3, 6, 1: 59, 12 “he (the sacrificer) has himself consecrated over the *vedi* saying ‘I expect to acquire (*vindai*)’, for he who has himself consecrated over the *vedi* acquires (*vindate*) ...; the gods, one should know, acquired the path of sacrificial worship ... by means of the *veda* ...” – “In that he (the officiant) is seated with the *veda* on the *vedi* he finds (*vindati*) the sacrifice for him (the patron). He hands the *veda* to the (patron's) wife. The sacrifice, one should know, is difficult to find (obtain, *duranuvedah*) there (in the other world). (Thus) he finds (obtains, *vindati*) the sacrifice for him. He hands it three times, for the gods are trebly truthful ...” (MS. 1, 4, 8: 55, 19).

The statement that the gods found (acquired, *vividuh*) the *vedi*, viz. the earth, by means of the *veda* occurs also in TB. 3, 3, 9, 10, where this mantra continues as follows: “This one, the earth, became larger (so as to become or produce) the earthly things (*pārthivāni*<sup>39</sup>). Inside the creatures (inhabited worlds?, *bhuvaneṣu*) she bears the embryo; from that the sacrifice which gives everything comes into existence”. “With this mantra – which is uttered in order to find the *vedi* – the *adhvaryu*, before (or after, ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 3) the *stambayajus* ceremony, rubs the *vedi* (three times) with the *veda* (also BhŚ. 2, 1, 4; ĀpŚ. 1.c.; also KS. 31, 14: 16, 20; MŚ. 1, 2, 4, 5). “Since the two are the *veda* and the *vedi*, this rite (the touching) is for copulation (*mithunatvāya*), for procreation (*prajātyai*, TB. § 11)”.

The *veda* is also an indispensable requisite for the preparation of the *vedi*. From MŚ. 1, 2, 4, 1 ff. it appears that after the *adhvaryu* has mentally measured out the *vedi*, scratched three lines with the wooden sword and so on, he takes the *veda* with the mantra KS. 31, 14: 16, 12 in which this utensil is said to have found the earth (with which the *vedi* is ‘identical’ or co-extensive, ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 7; 3, 7, 2, 1; 7, 3, 1, 15 etc.) and is requested to find a *loka* for the sacrificer and make the sacrifice complete (cf. TB. 3, 7, 6, 13; ĀpŚ. 2, 11, 10). Thereupon he rubs the *vedi* three times completely up (*samunmārṣti*) with the *veda* toward the east (the auspicious region of the gods) with the mantra KS. 31, 14: 16, 20 in which the gods are said to have found the *vedi*, the earth, with the *veda*. The use of the *veda* is here, in the usual way, represented as a repetition, *hic et nunc*, of an inherently powerful and exemplary mythical event, but the myth as well as rite are founded on the belief in a particular and specific power which, being inseparably associated with the *veda*, makes it pre-eminently suited for this purpose. The second mantra is, as TB. 3, 3, 9, 10, prescribed for the same purpose at BhŚ. 2, 1, 4; ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 3, which make no mention

37. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 396; cf. also ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 16.

38. Caland and Henry, L'agniṣṭoma, p. 215.

39. MŚ. 1, 2, 4, 5 reads *pārthivāya* (instead of *pārthivāni*) which may mean “for the inhabitant(s) of the earth” which is no doubt more satisfactory.



of the taking of the *veda*. In MŚ. 1, 7, 3, 13 the author briefly prescribes the same ritual acts on the occasion of the *varuṇapraghāsa*; in 2, 2, 1, 52 in his description of the *agnišṭoma*. And see also MŚ. 1, 1, 3, 3 “having made the *veda* he makes the *vedi* ...”; BŚ. 1, 2: 3, 14.

When *veda* and *vedi* are found together an author sometimes observes that the former is male, the latter, being grammatically feminine, is female. This statement is made the basis of ritualistic arguments or conclusions. See TB. 3, 3, 9, 10 f. quoted above and MS. 4, 1, 13: 18, 13 “the *vedi* (being feminine) is a woman, the *veda* (being masculine) is a man; that he rubs the *vedi* with the *veda* is in order to bring about (procreative) copulation (*mīthunavāya*)” (see also ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 3); and also KS. 31, 12: 14, 18; KapS. 47, 11: 295, 19 “the *vedi* is a woman, the *veda* a man; in that the *veda* strews on the *vedi*, it secures (procreative) copulation”; TB. 3, 7, 4, 12 “through thee (the *veda* is addressed) they (the gods) have acquired (*vividuḥ*) the earth as a *vedi* ...” (prescribed at ĀpŚ. 1, 6, 4 to accompany the preparation of the *veda*); ŚB. 1, 9, 2, 24 (cf. KŚ. 3, 8, 3) “the *vedi* is female and the *veda* male; from behind the male approaches the female; from behind (i.e. west) he (the *hotar*) accordingly causes it (the *vedi*) to be approached by that male, the *veda*; that is why he strews (the grass of the *veda*) from behind (west) as far as (the east end of) the *vedi*”; see also § 21.

Now, although some passages containing the expression *mīthunavāya* clearly refer to procreation of offspring (e.g. TB. 3, 3, 9, 11 (see above) “(and consequently) he (the officiant) obtains progeny (*vindate prajāṃ*, viz. for the sacrificer)”; 3, 2, 2, 6; JB. 2, 405 *māgadham ca puṃścalūṃ ca dakṣiṇe vedyante mīthunīkārāyatī, mīthunavāya prajānanāya. pra mīthunena jāyate ya evaṃ veda*)<sup>40</sup>, in other cases no mention is made of offspring: TB. 3, 2, 10, 2 “he (the officiant) puts down fuel and *barhis* (on the *vedi*), for (their mutual) union, for the pairing of the sacrifice”; in 3, 3, 4, 6 the purification of water with melted butter is done for copulation (in order to produce the union of these two); 3, 2, 9, 9 (see below). Compare, e.g., also ŚB. 2, 4, 4, 24 “he thus effects a union (*mīthunīkaroti*) between the quarters (of the universe) and the seasons”. In these cases the term “copulation” is – in modern terminology – a metaphor denoting the initiation of a ritual process on the sacrificial place, on the *vedi*, that results in the attainment of a desired object or the accomplishment of an aim. It is interesting to notice that the *vedi* is supposed to copulate also with the sacred fire, the ritual importance and indispensability of which needs no comment: “he carries the two shoulders (of the *vedi*) along both sides of the (*āhavanīya*) fire. For the *vedi* is female and the fire male, and the woman lies embracing the man; thereby a copulation productive of offspring is obtained” (ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 15; cf. TB. 3, 2, 9, 9).

The above, comparatively numerous places unmistakably attest to the existence of the belief in a sort of co-operation of *veda* and *vedi* with a view to finding or acquiring, for the benefit of the sacrificer, sacrificial worship (*yajña*) and to making this

40. On this passage see J. Gonda, in *Adyar Libr. Bull.* 25, p. 80 ff. (= S.S. IV, p. 225 ff.). – Compare also the mantra TB. 2, 5, 5, 1; ĀpŚ. 9, 17, 1 “this *vedi* (must be) rich in offspring and energetic men”.

feasible and successful<sup>41</sup>. It seems therefore worth while to draw attention to some relevant occurrences of the term *vedi*<sup>42</sup>, especially to its function in the sacrificial process.

Already in RV. 1, 164, 34 f. (AVŚ. 9, 15, 13 f.; AVP. 16, 69, 4 f.; VS. 23, 61 f.; TS. 7, 4, 18, 2; KS. 5, 4, 7: 164, 5; ŚB. 13, 5, 2, 20 f.; TB. 3, 9, 5, 5) the *vedi* is said to be or represent the extreme (furthest) end (border) of the earth and the sacrifice the navel of the (inhabited) world (*bhuvanasya*). Navel of the earth or of the world is the well-known name applied to the (holy) centre of the world, which by means of the *axis mundi* remains in communication with the superterrestrial region. A temple, sanctuary, altar, or sacred object is regarded as being situated in the "navel" and considered to be central and holy, because it is nearest to heaven, which from there can be reached<sup>43</sup>. Since the sacrifice is in this ṛgvedic passage the navel of the earth, the *vedi* surrounding it can indeed be described as its extreme border<sup>44</sup>.

In RV. 3, 5, 9 a reference to the navel of the earth follows one to the vertex of the sky (*vārṣman divó údhi nābhā pṛthivyāḥ*), two places connected by the cosmic axis, in a stanza that requests Agni, said to have appeared brightly in that navel – i.e. on the sacrificial place –, to convey the gods (to those speaking), that men may worship them. The above references to vertex and navel recur in TB. 3, 7, 7, 14, in a stanza which at ĀpŚ. 11, 4, 14 is to be recited by the *adhvaryu* when he orders his assistants to prepare the *mahāvedi*<sup>45</sup>: "Come, O men, and prepare this *vedi*, where

41. After the story of the acquisition of sacrificial worship the author of MS. 3, 8, 3: 95, 15 observes: "that the gods thus acquired the sacrifice (*yajñam avindan*), that is why *devayajanam* (mostly used in the sense of "place of worshipping the gods") has its name. In that one tries to obtain a *devayajanam*, one tries to obtain sacrificial worship (*yajña*); in that one finds (obtains) it, one finds (obtains) sacrificial worship (the sacrifice)". In PB. 25, 13, 3 Prajāpati's *vedi* is said to be as large as Kurukṣetra, which in ŚB. 14, 1, 1, 2 is stated to be the *devayajanam* of the gods.
42. A *vedi* is not "an altar made in the house of the offerer" (Keith, *Rel. and phil.*, p. 254), but in the post-ṛgvedic ritual an elevated or excavated plot of ground, strewn with *darbha* on which sacrificial food, utensils and so on are placed. See also Caland and Henry, *L'agniśtoma*, p. XLI; Krick, *Feuergründung*, Index, p. 674, and especially, p. 108 ff. The ṛgvedic occurrences are comparatively few in number: on 1, 164, 34 f. see above; in 1, 170, 4 "they must make the *vedi* ready" (according to 8, 19, 18 in the early morning), the poet does not say how they must do that, but in 10, 61, 2 Cyāvāna marked off (the limits of) a *vedi* by means of the mud of a dried-up pool, which can mean that he was making some sort of elevation; cf., e.g., TB. 1, 2, 1, 3 with the comm.; ĀpŚ. 5, 1, 7; 5, 9, 10; was this the usual or an exceptional procedure in ṛgvedic times?; at 2, 3, 4 the gods are invited to sit down on the *barhis* which is spread on the *vedi*; in 1, 140, 1 the epithet "seated on the *vedi*" is given to Agni, in 4, 40, 5 to the *hotar*; in 5, 31, 12 the pressing-stone must be placed on the *vedi*, in 6, 1, 10 fuel and offerings; in 7, 35, 7 the young shoots of grass and the *vedi* are besought to bring happiness; in 7, 60, 9 the officiant must satisfy the claims of the *vedi* by means of a sacrifice. We must here also beware of the *argumentum e silentio* and should not from the silence of the Rgveda-Saṃhitā as to certain particulars conclude that in that early period they did not exist at all.
43. Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, p. 38 ff.; for bibliographical references: Heiler, *Erscheinungsformen*, p. 35, n. 5; on "kraftefüllte Kultstätte" in Africa see E. Dammann, *Die Religionen Afrikas*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 69; 131 ff.; for "heaven" as a name of such a place, p. 31, n. 152.
44. Compare P. Thieme, *Mitra and Aryaman*, Trans. Connecticut Acad. 41, New Haven 1957, p. 90.
45. The great *vedi* of a *soma* sacrifice (see Ch. Sen, *Dict. of Vedic rituals*, p. 98), in the texts also briefly called *vedi*.

the Vasus, the Rudras, the Ādityas will assemble, on the vertex of the sky, in the navel of the earth, so that this sacrificer may not suffer damage”.

When the *adhvaryu* preparing the *vedi* touches it three times with the *veda* (BhŚ. 2, 1, 4; ĀpŚ. 2, 1, 3), the sacrificer has to recite the mantra TB. 3, 7, 6, 4 “the well-adorned young woman with four tufts of hair, with her face brilliant with clarified butter (is) in the middle of the world. So, being adorned to great happiness, do thou (O *Vedi*,) give me, the sacrificer, the objects of my desire” (BhŚ. 4, 6, 4; ĀpŚ. 4, 5, 1).

From the line AVP. 20, 34, 4 ab “our sacrifice must quickly approach the gods, approach the *vedi*” it may, I think, be inferred that the way along which the sacrifice was supposed to reach the gods passed or traversed the *vedi*. This interpretation seems to be in harmony with PB. 1, 1, 7, where the *vedi* is addressed: “(thou art) the ford (*fīrtham*, i.e. *taraṅasthānam*, “the place where they cross over or pass”, comm.) of the gods, the *vedi*”. Assuming the form of the *gāyatrī* (metre, which can assume the shape of a bird, ŚB. 12, 3, 4, 3) the *vedi* bears the knowing sacrificer to the world of heaven (11, 4, 1, 16; cf. 8).

In AVP. 8, 11, 1 the *vedi* is described as causing men to increase, i.e. as granting them prosperity and so on (*mānuṣyavardhanīm*); the person speaking (*aham* “I”) says he is its centre (*madhyam*) and makes twice mention of its four corners or edges: the cosmic number four refers to the regions of the universe<sup>46</sup>. That means that he is safe in the centre of the world. The *vedi* is or represents “well-being, prosperity” (*svastī*, TS. 3, 2, 4, 1). “So much of the earth is free from death as is occupied by the surrounded *vedi*” (MS. 1, 6, 3: 89, 14). The *vedi* is the own *loka* (place or room to live or dwell in safely) of the sacrificer (*eṣa vai yajamānasya svo loko yad vediḥ*, KS. 28, 6: 160, 16). Elsewhere (TS. 1, 7, 5, 3) it is called his *āyatana*, his proper functional position<sup>47</sup>. This conception does not seem to be inconsistent with the conviction worded in ŚB. 11, 2, 7, 33 “whatever good (right) deed man does that is inside the *vedi*, and whatever evil deed he does is outside the *vedi*”. “He for whom, if he knows this, they (the *adhvaryu cum suis*) enclose the *vedi*, prospers himself (and) his rival perishes” (TB. 3, 2, 9, 7 f.).

In AVŚ. 12, 1, 13 (AVP. 17, 2, 5), which in Vait. 15, 8 is used to accompany the enclosing of the *vedi*, the earth, on which they execute that task and on which men performing all kinds of sacrificial rites extend the sacrifice, is besought to make those speaking increase. In the above-mentioned<sup>48</sup> stanza TB. 3, 3, 9, 10 – in which the *vedi* is characterized as a womb – the word *pr̥thivīm* follows *vedīm* as an apposition and is consequently regarded as equivalent. In AVŚ. 13, 1, 46 and 53 the earth is said to have taken shape as *vedi* (see also AVP. 18, 19, 6) and the *causa efficiens*

46. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 36 f.

47. It is dangerous to offer oblations *anāyatane*, i.e. not in one's *āyatana* (i.e. in the place with which one has a mystic relation and which participates in one's essence) and therefore in a wrong place (for particulars and references see Gonda, *Āyatana*, in *Adyar Libr. Bull.* 33, p. 48 ff. (= S.S. 11, p. 225 ff.)). – Notice that the measures of the *vedi* were relative to the size of a man, in some cases to that of the sacrificer (KS. 37, 16: 97, 2; KŚ. 2, 6, 2 ff.; ŚB. 10, 2, 1, 2); see also Staal, *Agni*, p. 196.

48. See p. 226.

of this process is, according to st. 52, the Sun as Rohita, the Ruddy One, who is eulogized in this hymn. Elsewhere the earth is said to be as large as the *vedi* (TS. 2, 6, 4, 1; 3; MS. 3, 8, 6: 101, 15; KS. 29, 8: 177, 8; 37, 16: 97, 3; see also ŚB. 1, 3, 3, 9; 3, 7, 2, 1; TB. 3, 2, 9, 12), or to be the *vedi* (MS. 1, 8, 7: 126, 12; AiB. 5, 28, 1). But, it is argued in TS. 6, 2, 4, 5, although the whole earth is the *vedi*, one measures off and worships on so much as one deems one can use. – The author of ŚB. 1, 2, 5, 7 adds an explanation: “as great as the *vedi* is, so great is the earth, for by it (the *vedi*) they (the gods) obtained this entire (earth)”, and the sacrificer who knows this reaps benefit from this fact: he excludes his rivals from participation in the earth. Elsewhere the *vedi* is “identified” with the earth: TS. 2, 6, 5, 2; TB. 3, 3, 6, 2; 8; ŚB. 7, 3, 1, 15; 18; 27; 7, 5, 2, 31; 9, 1, 2, 11; 9, 4, 2, 3; 12, 8, 2, 36. The *vedi* is at KS. 28, 1: 152, 9 stated to be the domain of the gods (*devakṣetram*) and the earth to be as large as the *vedi*. In ŚB. 8, 6, 3, 6 the “world” of the gods (*devalokaḥ*) is identified with the *vedi*: that means that this sacred place is just like a temple the dwelling-place or residence of the god(s)<sup>49</sup>.

These texts corroborate the above conclusion that the ritualists considered the *veda* to be a very important utensil because it has found or was a means of finding or obtaining the *vedi*, an event which has made sacrificial worship possible, the *vedi* being the sacred centre par excellence, the place where man can meet the gods and from which he can come into contact with the heavenly world, enabling him to sacrifice successfully and to expect the fulfilment of all his desires.

Turning now to the etymological aspect of the relationship of *veda* and *vedi* we have seen that the ritualists traced both words back to the same root, viz. *vid-* (*vin-dati*). From their point of view this etymology is no nonsense. Now, the etymology of *vedi* is a matter of dispute. According to Johansson, Oldenberg and Thieme<sup>50</sup> it belongs (as *\*(a)va-zd-i > vedi*) to *sad-*, *sīdati* “to sit down” and must originally have meant “seat”, according to Wackernagel and Mayrhofer<sup>51</sup> the origin of the word is not clear. A convincing etymology of *veda* has, to the best of my knowledge, never been proposed<sup>52</sup>. Since the *vedi* consists of strewn grass or is covered with grass and the *veda* is made of grass, Mayrhofer wondered whether both words are etymologically related, and seems to be inclined to trace them both back to an original name of a kind or particular use of grass. He does not however refer to such a word (except oss. *wīdag* “root” etc.,?). Is the following attempt to solve the problem entirely inconceivable? Johansson’s etymology of *vedi* – or a similar hypothesis – is right, but the word was at an early date because of its main and essential function<sup>53</sup>

49. Compare, e.g., S. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion*, Stuttgart 1960, p. 93; H. Ringgren, *Israelitische Religion*, Stuttgart 1963, p. 139; 146.

50. K.J. Johansson, *Über die altindische Göttin Dhiṣaṇā*, Uppsala 1917, p. 51; and in *Le monde oriental* 12, p. 244 ff.; 253 f.; H. Oldenberg, in *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 1919, p. 361; P. Thieme, in *Gött. Gel. Anz.* 209, p. 212 (= *Kleine Schriften*, II, Wiesbaden 1971, p. 691).

51. Wackernagel, *Altind. Grammatik*, II, 2, p. 300; Mayrhofer, *Wörterbuch*, III, p. 258.

52. For attempts see Mayrhofer, *op. cit.*, III, p. 257.

53. Compare cases such as *utsava* “the generating, stimulating or producing (of power)” which came to denote “a festival” (J. Gonda, in *India antiqua*, vol. J.Ph. Vogel, Leiden 1947, p. 146 ff. (= S.S. II, p. 275 ff.).

re-interpreted<sup>54</sup> as “a thing that finds or acquires, the means of acquiring par excellence” (cf. *kṛti* “knife, dagger” (ṚV. 1, 168, 3: *kṛt- kṛntati* “to cut”); *khani* “digging” and (in post-Vedic texts) “mine, quarry” etc.) and gave, after models such as *dravi* “one who causes to run, makes fluid, i.e. melts metal” (ṚV. 6, 3, 4): *drava* “running” (4, 40, 2)<sup>55</sup>, rise to *vedā* in the sense of “that which (he who) acquires” (cf. *rokā* “light”: *ruc-* “to shine, be bright”; *nāyā* “leader, guide: *nī-* “to lead, guide” and so on). It may be noticed that *vedā* is not found in the Ṛgveda, but a word *\*vedā* in the sense of “the acquiring, acquisition” must have existed, because *suveda* “easy to be obtained or to be won” does occur (ṚV. 4, 7, 6 of Agni, 6, 48, 15 etc. of property, valuables and so on)<sup>56</sup>. The difference in accent is in accordance with a well-known rule: agent nouns in (the primary) *-a-* are accented on the suffix, action nouns on the root<sup>57</sup>. Moreover, primary derivatives show as a rule the root syllable in its strong form. Finally, if *vedā* like, e.g., *aśva* “horse” and many others does not derive from a verbal root, it is remarkable that notwithstanding its outward appearance, which is decidedly indo-european, no cognates of it seem to have been found.

54. Though not bearing upon the problem under discussion, mention may be made of a case of re-interpretation in the same ritual sphere: Lat. *altaria* (plur.) “that which was placed upon the altar proper (*ara*) for the burning of the victim”, which probably belongs to *adolere* “to burn (burnt-offerings)”, was in popular feeling and in the opinion of scholars regarded as deriving from *altus* “high” (see, e.g., A. Walde and J.B. Hofmann, Lat. etym. Wörterbuch, I, Heidelberg 1938, p. 32). – The title of the Vedic functionary *hotar*, which no doubt derives from *hu-* “to pour an oblation” (for references see Mayrhofer, Wörterbuch, III, p. 612 and Minard, Trois énigmes, I, p. 123, § 346 a) was already in the Nirukta (4, 26; 7, 15) regarded as belonging to *hvā, hū-* (*hvayati*) “to call, invoke”. – On the etymology of *vedi* also G.U. Thite, Sacrifice in the Brāhmaṇa-texts, Poona 1975, p. 110 f.
55. There also exist many adaptive new-formations for which no proportional model can be given: see L. Bloomfield, Language, London 1935, p. 420 f.
56. Notice also the occurrence of *vedīṣṭha* “der am besten (für Lobsinger) ausfindig macht!” (Geldner, ṚV. 8, 2, 24) and *vedīyas* (likewise of Indra, 7, 98, 1).
57. As to *suveda*, simple words on becoming members of compounds generally retain their original accent.



## Kurcā

The word *kūrca* does not occur in the RV. and AV. saṃhitās and only twice, in connexion with the same rite, in other saṃhitās<sup>1</sup>. It is sometimes translated by "mat" (Keith) or also by "pad"<sup>2</sup>, and explained as follows: "a bunch of anything, bundle or handful of (*kuśa*) grass" (Monier-Williams), "bunch composed of soft material (grass) used as a seat"<sup>3</sup>. Sometimes the material of which a *kūrca* is made is mentioned: BGŚ. 2, 14, 2 *kūrco darbhamaḥ*<sup>4</sup>. There can be no doubt that in ordinary life such seats were, or could be, pieces of household furniture<sup>5</sup>. This appears, e.g., from GautDh. 10, 58 enjoining a *śūdra* to use the cast-off shoes, umbrellas, garments and *kūrcaḥ* of members of the higher social classes. In the parallel passage Manu 10, 125 mention is made of worn out clothes and old household furniture (*jīrṇās caiva paricchadāḥ*). It should not however be inferred from ŚB. 14, 6, 11, 1 (BĀU. 4, 2, 1), where Janaka, king of Videha, is related to have got up gently from his *kūrca* and approached<sup>6</sup> Yājñavalkya, that such a *kūrca* was only found in a royal palace, nor should we suppose this seat (*āsanaviśeṣa*, comm. on ŚB.) to have been a "lounge" or "throne"<sup>7</sup>.

The use of some verbs may create misunderstanding with regard to the height of a *kūrca*. When at AiĀ. 5, 1, 4 it is stated that the assistants of the *hotar* and the *brahman kūrcaṇ samārohanti* this means that they sit down on it, not that they mount it (cf. Monier-Williams' Dictionary and Keith's translation of TS. 7, 5, 8, 5<sup>8</sup>). Dealing with the midday pressing of a *soma* sacrifice VaitS. 34, 8 even says that these

1. This makes Dravidian origin of the word (T. Burrow, in BSOAS 12, p. 375) less improbable. The etymological relationship with Lat. *culcita* "a sack filled with feathers, wool, hair etc. for lying upon or warming etc." (Wackernagel, Altind. Grammatik, I, p. 210) is for semantic reasons not evident (otherwise A. Walde and J.B. Hofmann, Lat. etym. Wörterbuch, I, Heidelberg 1938, p. 302).
2. See Eggeling, Śat. Br. V, p. 360 f., n. 1.
3. See, e.g., Nīlakaṇṭha on Mbh. 14, 71, 10 *kūrca āsanārtham kuśamuṣṭiḥ*, and HŚ. 16, 6, 12 *kūrcaḥphalaka* "kūrca bench".
4. For *kūrcaḥ sadarbhaḥ* ("with *darbhā*") see VGP. 11, 3.
5. R. Gopal, India of Vedic kalpasūtras, Delhi 1959, p. 156 does not mention it.
6. *upāvasarpat*, not "approached creeping" (Monier-Williams), or "descending from" (R.E. Hume, The thirteen principal upaniṣads, Oxford 1934, p. 131 and others).
7. S. Radhakrishnan, The principal upaniṣads, London 1953, p. 252; E. Röer, The twelve principal upaniṣads, Adyar, Madras 1931, p. 321; "cushion", Hume, l. cit.; otherwise: E. Senart, Bṛhad-āraṇyaka-upaniṣad, Paris 1934, p. 69: "siège de gazon" (likewise, A. Beth, Vier upaniṣaden, Amsterdam 1977, p. 62).
8. as well as the verb "descending" in Hume's translation quoted in n. 6.

*hotrakas* sit down after having made or prepared *kūrcas* (on the spot). (See also ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 15; JB. 2, 418: the other *hotrakas* are *kūrcasadaḥ*)<sup>9</sup>. In translating one should therefore as a rule avoid the word “stool” unless the context and the authority of a commentator point that way: at ŚB. 13, 4, 3, 1 the sacrificer is seated on a golden *kūrca*<sup>10</sup>, explained as something of the size of a stool that has been given the outward form (character) of a *kūrca* (*kūrcīkṛti pīṭhamātram*, comm.); see also KŚ. 20, 2, 19 f. “the *adhvaryu* and the sacrificer (are seated) on *kūrcas* (“viz. golden, a *kūrca* is a seat with legs”, comm.) or on benches (*phalakayoḥ*)”. This may have been a seat with a cushion or covering consisting of grass and some gold ornament. Also in ĀśvŚ. 10, 6, 11 the *adhvaryu* is seated on a “gold *kūrca*” (*hiraṇmaye kūrcē*); see also VaitS. 36, 23 (for the sacrificer, *aśvamedha*).

According to ŚŚ. 4, 21, 2 the guest who is received respectfully either sits down or takes his stand on (*adhitiṣṭhati*) a *kūrca* with the mantra “I am the top (vertex) of those who are my equals, as the sun is (the top) of the flashes of lightning. Here I tread on him who treats us as enemies”<sup>11</sup>. Here the *kūrca* is a sort of seat or platform not only of honour but also of authority. Gṛhyasūtras make mention of the same rite (and of the mantra, with slight variations), but ĀśvG. 1, 24, 8 f. enjoins the guest to sit down on a *viṣṭara* or to do so after he has trodden on it; PG. 1, 3, 8 to sit down on the *viṣṭara* after having accepted it and to tread on the other bundle of grass with his feet. VG. 11, 6 goes into some details: the guest receives two *viṣṭarau*, spreads (grass) with the tops directed towards the north on a stool (*āsandī*)<sup>12</sup>, as a rule made of basket work) whilst muttering the formula “thou art a bearer (or one who confers) royal power” (*rāṣṭrabhrd asi*), sits down with a variant of the above mantra and draws the other (*viṣṭara*) under his feet towards himself<sup>13</sup> with the formula “let me not be separated from thee”. A similar version is found in MG. 1, 9, 8 f. where the mantra *rāṣṭrabhrd ... asi* is followed by “the seat of an *ācārya*”<sup>14</sup>. Compare also ŚB. 12, 8, 3, 5 “the *āsandī* is (means) dominion (royal dignity, *rāṣṭram*)”.

It is of interest to notice that in spite of the different words used to indicate the grass and the other differences in particulars the offering of this grass and the seat is not only a homage paid to a distinguished guest. The grass is explicitly said to confer a dignity upon the guest, viz., as may be inferred from BhG. 2, 23: 56, 8 and ĀpG. 13, 2 f. (prescribing ĀpMB. 2, 9, 8 and 9), that of temporal power to a nobleman or a chief of a community (village), that of a teacher to a brahmin<sup>15</sup>,

9. Notice that the chair (*āsandī*) for the *udgātar* mentioned at ŚŚ. 17, 2, 6 f. is a short span high (from the tip of the thumb to that of the forefinger).

10. For a golden *kūrca* see also Mbh. 14, 71, 10.

11. These words remind me of the cry of the Kwakiutl neophyte “I am at the Center of the World” which “at once reveals one of the deepest meanings of sacred space” (Eliade, *The sacred and the profane*, p. 36).

12. On the *āsandī* and other seats see J. Auboyer, *Le trône et son symbolisme dans l'Inde ancienne*, Paris 1949, p. 8 etc.

13. Compare the expression *kurcāv adhasṭād upohya* in LŚ. 3, 12, 5.

14. See the note in Dresden, *Mānavagṛhyasūtra*, p. 34.

15. Notice that in ĀpG. 11, 7 the teacher who performs the initiation sits down with the same formula, viz. *rāṣṭrabhrd asi, ācāryasandī, mā tvad yoṣam* (ĀpMB. 2, 4, 12); see below.

that of a commander to a general. The seat consisting of grass may be considered to abstract the man so that the nobleman, the chief etc. remain, or rather to exert a confirmatory influence, to consolidate their power and position, a belief with which many modern men are (or may be) still more or less familiar<sup>16</sup>. The reason why the *hotrakas* (see above), two chanters, the *brahman* and the patron should be seated on *kūrcas* is, according to PB. 5, 5, 12<sup>17</sup>, even that “thereby they keep ascending upwards (i.e. as a result of their being seated higher heavenward, comm.)” (cf. KS. 34, 5: 38, 23). It may be added that previous to the above passage the host is in BhG. 2, 23: 56, 6 said to have “proceeded with the *kūrca*” and thereupon also with the other objects that are to be offered to a distinguished guest.

It is therefore perfectly intelligible that on the occasion of the initiation ceremonies the teacher (*ācārya*), engaged in teaching the *sāvitrī*, should be seated, facing the east, on a *kūrca* which has been placed to the west of the fire<sup>18</sup>, the tops of its grasses being turned to the north (BG. 2, 5, 38; HG. 1, 6, 9); the mantra is “thou art a bearer (giver) of royal power, a teacher’s seat . . .” (see above); cf. also ĀpG. 11, 7; 13, 2. The pupil is seated on *darbha* grasses (BG. 39) facing the west. – For the *brahman* who is seated on a *kūrca* on the south side see BGP. 1, 5, 4 f. After having put down a *kūrca* (see BhG. 1, 2: 2, 12) the performer of the *upanayana* ritual sits down on it whilst facing eastward. – In a description of the ceremonious reception of the bridegroom the author of BG. 1, 2, 5 f. states that one should put ready as many *kūrcāḥ* and brass vessels as there are priests as well as two other, so-called *parigrahaṇīyau*, *kūrcau*.

When the Great Soul (Mahāpuruṣa) is, in accordance with the rules laid down in BGŚ. 2, 14, 2, invoked (*āvahana*), one offers him a seat made of *darbha* grass which in the accompanying mantra is described as a *kūrca* consisting of three-stranded *darbha*. When Viṣṇu or Rudra are invited to manifest themselves, one offers them a *kūrca* with the sacred syllable *om* (BGŚ. 2, 13, 19; 2, 16, 23); in 3, 3, 1 Durgā is given a *kūrca* with the mantra ṚVkh. 4, 2, 12 a; TĀ. 10, 2, 1; in 3, 15, 4 Īśāna (Rudra) one with the words: “this is the *kūrca* of (for) the Bhagavān consisting of *darbha* and gold, three-stranded, greenish . . .” (see also 4, 2, 21).

Among the remarkable rites that are characteristic of the *mahāvratā* ceremony<sup>19</sup> is the obligatory sitting down of the *udgātar* on a chair (*āsandī*) with the result that “they – i.e. the sacrificers – attain to universal sovereignty (*sāmrājyam*)”; of the *hotar* on a swing on which he is swung to and fro, with the result that they mount the back of the firmament and of the *adhvaryu* on two *kūrcas* so that they reach the surface of the ruddy one (i.e. the sun). It is clear and also stated in what follows that these three places are steps to heaven and that the third place is regarded as the highest (TS. 7, 5, 8, 5). This is also said in KS. 34, 5: 38, 23: “they are continually approaching the heavenly world”; however, there the two *adhvaryus* – i.e. the *adhvaryu* and his assistant – are said to be standing on a standing-place, the others to

16. For authority derived from the seat of a functionary see Auboyer, Le trône, esp. p. 177 ff.

17. See p. 235.

18. On this position see Kane, Hist. of Dharmasāstra, II, p. 209 f.

19. See Gonda, Die Religionen Indiens, 2I, p. 161 f.; Keith, Religion and philosophy, p. 351.

be sitting down on *kūrcas*. According to BŚ. 16, 20 f. the *hotar* makes ready a swing, the *adhvaryu* two *kūrcau*, the *hotrakas* rolls of twisted grass (*bṛṣīḥ*), the *udgātar* an *āsandī* of *udumbara* wood (p. 266, 8). The *hotar* takes hold of the swing, the *adhvaryu* spreads the *kūrcau* under (himself), the *hotrakas* the *bṛṣīḥ*, the *udgātar* sits down on the *āsandī* (p. 267, 7). Being seated on the *kūrcau* the *adhvaryu* fulfils his official duty, that is initiates the *māhendrasya stotra*. Other variants are found in ŚŚ. 17: here the (same) seats are put together or prepared for the above officiants: 17, 2, 6 the *āsandī*; 17, 4, 5 f. the *kūrca* (singular) for the *adhvaryu* by means of *muñja* or *kuśa* grass; the text adds that he makes his responds whilst standing on it. The other consecrated participants have for each of them a *bṛṣī* made; these are, above the ground, a span high. ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 14 mentions the two *kūrcas* for the *adhvaryu* and, alternatively, the plank (of *udumbara* wood) which is employed also in PB. 5, 5, 11; in ĀpŚ. 21, 20, 7 he makes use of two planks or one *kūrca*. The *hotrakas* are seated on *kūrcas* (PB. 5, 5, 12; ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 15).

Among the requisites for an *agnihotra* is a *kūrca* – or alternatively *kūrcāḥ* – which is to be placed by the *adhvaryu* to the west of the *āhavanīya* hearth, to be the place where to put the ladles (KŚ. 4, 13, 14, the comm. explaining *kūrca*: *āsanapaṭṭa* “a flat or level surface to sit upon, the seat of the spoon (*śruc*), like a flat surface of a seat measuring a *bāhu* (the arm between elbow and wrist) and made of *varaṇa* wood” (which is supposed to have magical and medicinal virtues; see Kauś. 8, 15 and also used for making the *śruva* (spoon), enclosing sticks etc. (e.g. ŚB. 13, 8, 4, 1; 8), its name predestines this crataeva Roxburgii to ward off (*vārayati*, ŚB. § 1) evil; according to an other comm. *kāṣṭhanirmilāsanapaṭṭa*). See also BŚ. 3, 5: 73, 16; 3, 6: 75, 4; 8, and KŚ. 4, 14, 16 “he (the *adhvaryu*) then puts the ladle on the *kūrca* and looks at the *gārhapatya* fire before he proceeds to make an offering in it”, and, e.g., also BŚ. 3, 5: 74, 4; 9.

In ceremoniously preparing the five products of the cow one should pour the milk, sour milk, butter, dung and urine by means of a *pavitra* into the respective jars which have been placed on a *kūrca* (BGŚ. 2, 20, 7). – When in a bathing rite a jar is filled with water and this with *pañcagavya* a *kūrca* is again placed under it and an earthenware plate laid on it to cover it (2, 21, 8). – Among the requisites for a (non-Vedic) bath given to Viṣṇu are nine water-jars which are placed on *kūrcas* laid on level places consisting of rice (2, 15, 6)<sup>20</sup>.

We also read that a *kūrca* or *kūrcāḥ* are specially made for sacrificial purposes. Describing the preparation of the *sthaṇḍila*<sup>21</sup>, a piece of level open ground, for the non-Vedic *śalābhiṣeka* sacrifice (performed for a person who is 100 years old or has seen 1000 moons) ĀgnG. 2, 4, 6: 65, 9 informs us that after that place has been strewn with fruits, flowers and so on one makes two *kūrce* of the same shape etc., a span long and with the tips (of their grass stalks) turned eastward (*prācīnāgre*) and “lays down” the *sthaṇḍila* with *kūrcāḥ* (plural) that have their tips turned forward (eastward, *prāgagraiḥ*). Lastly one puts down one *kūrca*, adorns water-pots with unhusked barley-corns, flowers etc. and invokes (the deities) of all regions of the universe to

20. For the number nine see Gonda, Aspects, p. 94 f. etc., for rice p. 221 f. etc.

21. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 231 f.

occupy these pots. Since no further information is given, we may suppose this *kūrca* to have been the seat or stand of the one who performs the invocation. The other description of this rite, BGŚ. 1, 24 makes no mention of *kūrcas*.

In the *brahmodya* – a dialogic disputation regarding the nature of *brahman* as well as ritual or cosmic problems, *in casu* on the nature of the *agnihotra* – related in ŚB. 11, 5, 3 one of the questions posed is: “Why, having offered, do you shake the spoon (*sruc*)? Why, having cleansed the spoon all round (the spout), did you wipe it on the *kūrca* (which according to the comm. consists of *kuśa*)?” (§ 4). The answers are: “I shake (the spoon) after having offered (because) it belongs to Vāyu. When, having cleansed the spoon, I wiped it on the *kūrca*, I gratified the herbs and the trees” (§ 7). A similar explanation is given at KB. 2, 2 (2, 3, 9 f.): “he gratifies the (useful) plants”. This text adds, in connexion with the fact that the officiant wipes the spoon a second time, the information that he lays down his outstretched hand (*utlāna*, the palm being turned upwards; see also ĀśvŚ. 2, 4, 25; BŚ. 3, 6, 14) to the south of the *kūrca* in order to delight (gratify) the Fathers. For this rite see also KŚ. 4, 14, 20 *srucam kūrcā nimārṣi* ..., that is “... he wipes the fat of the milk on the northern part of the *kūrca*” (comm.), but according to another comm. he wipes his hand which is smeared with that substance on the *kūrca*; also BŚ. 3, 6, 12, stating that he wipes his hands on the plants after having placed the *sruc* on the *kūrca*; ĀśvŚ. 2, 3, 20 speaks of “wiping on the roots of the *kuśa*” in stead of *kūrce*; MŚ. 1, 6, 1, 44 of *darbha* (plur.); ŚŚ. 2, 9, 10; ĀpŚ. 6, 10, 11 f. and HŚ. 3, 7, 2: p. 349 speaking of *barhiṣi*; VaitS. 7, 14 has the spoon put and the hands cleaned on what it calls the *barhis*. Several texts prescribe the mantras “I gratify the plants” and “refresh (animate) the plants”<sup>22</sup>.

After having offered three libations the performer of the *agnihotra* should for the fourth time fill the ladle with water and pour it out behind (to the west of) the *āhavanīya* with the mantra “on the earth I pour out the *amṛta*” (ĀpŚ. 6, 12, 4); similarly, with the same mantra HŚ. 3, 7, 101. BŚ 3, 7: 76, 11 has the water poured out behind the *gārhapatya* with another mantra. ĀśvŚ. 2, 4, 14, however, enjoins the performer to pour the water out on the ground on the place of the *kuśa* grass – with which he has cleaned the spoon (2, 3, 20 f.; 2, 4, 13) – with the above mantra. KŚ. 4, 14, 28 has the water thrown (behind the *āhavanīya*, comm.) over the place on which the *kūrca* had been put (after having removed that object, comm.); this act should be performed three times with “to Agni who dwells on (rules over) the earth (*pr̥thivīkṣite*)<sup>23</sup>”; “to the earth I pour out *amṛta*” and “in (on) *amṛta* I pour out *amṛta*”. These formulae allow us to form an idea of the significance of this ritual act. Has the *kūrca* made the place at the rear<sup>24</sup> of the *āhavanīya* (KŚ. 4, 13, 14) more, or especially, fit for receiving this *amṛta* water?

One puts a number of requisites – an earthen dish, the *sruc* etc. – for the *agnihotra* that have been washed to the north of the *gārhapatya*, their usual place, on a *kūrca*

22. For a survey of the relevant places see P.E. Dumont, L'agnihotra, Baltimore 1939, Table synoptique, no. 122.

23. For this compound see AVP. 9, 6, 6; VādhŚ. 3, 51; TĀ. 1, 12, 4. – For Agni and the earth compare A.A. Macdonell, Vedic mythology, Strassburg 1897, p. 91 f.

24. For the significance of the west see Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 54 f.



or in a woven wicker-work basket (*sūnā*) (BŚ. 3, 4: 72, 17). – For sacrificial food placed on and covered with *darbha* see BGŚ. 4, 19, 1 (*nāndīmukha* Fathers). – In VaikhŚ. 11, 10: 129, 11, of which there is no counterpart in ĀpŚ., it is argued that at an additional sacrifice the implements used in ordinary life should be regarded as fit for the various ritual acts. One should prepare a *kūrca*, broad one (short) span, twofold tied (strung) together at the top, with blades of *kuśa* two spans long and even in number. Does the variant reading that has been adopted by the editor imply that on that *kūrca* is a *camasa* (a kind of cup, flat dish with or without a handle used for drinking the soma<sup>25</sup>)? In the other variant mention is made of a *kūrca* which is to put upon (a vessel). – In preparing the *madhuparka* the brass vessel used for this purpose is at BG. 1, 2, 9 placed on a *kūrca* (HG. 1, 12, 13 does not mention it).

The performer of the so-called spit-ox sacrifice (*śulagava*) offered to Rudra<sup>26</sup> should see to it that the blood of the victim is presented to the god and his hosts in leaves, on *kūrcas*, as a *bali* (PG. 3, 8, 11).

VaikhDh. 2, 1: 122, 7 makes mention of *paristarāṇakūrcaṅ* “the grass-bunches for strewing around the fire” (Caland).

In VaikhG. 1, 9: 11, 3 the performer of the *āghāra* ritual is enjoined to wipe around the “sacrificial girdle” (round the fire) with a moistened hand or a *kūrca*<sup>27</sup>. This ritual act makes the place a protected area. According to, for instance, Jayā-khya-Saṃhitā 15, 78 and Viśvāmitra-Saṃhitā 11, 21, texts of the Viṣṇuīte Pāñcarātra, one has to pick up a *kūrca*, dip it in the jug containing the holy sprinkling water and then sprinkle the water dripping from it all around the fire-pit<sup>28</sup>.

Describing the place for the sacred fire and the requisites for the sacrifice VaikhG. 1, 8: 9, 11 deals also with a *kūrca* for sprinkling (*prokṣaṇakūrca*) which is composed of 15 blades of *darbha* tied together, the top of which is four fingers broad, the knot two fingers, its length being one cubit. In 1, 11: 13, 2 this utensil is used for scooping up water out of<sup>29</sup> the two vessels containing the so-called *praṇīta* water and for sprinkling the *sruva* (a small dipping spoon).

Sometimes the use of the two *kūrcas* is indeed intelligible at first sight. For instance, when on the occasion of a ceremonious reception (*arḡha*) the host announces the *arḡha* water, which he holds in an earthen vessel with two *kūrcas*, to his guest (ĀpG. 13, 7). Since this liquid is not hot the *kūrcas* are not used to protect the bearer’s hand. Part of this *arḡha* water is poured over the guest’s hands; it is accepted with “thou camest to me with honour (renown, *yaśas*); unite me with fiery energy (*tejas*), with brilliant prestige (*varcas*) ...” (HG. I, 13, 3). The *madhuparka*<sup>30</sup> – a mix-

25. In a standard soma sacrifice the *camasas* are placed and kept on the *khara*, a four-cornered mound covered with sand (KŚ. 8, 5, 29; ĀpŚ. 11, 13, 8).

26. Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 435 ff.

27. See Gonda, The *āghāra* ritual, p. 13 f.

28. See also S. Gupta, Lakṣmī-Tantra, Thesis Utrecht, Leiden 1972, p. 260.

29. This must, I think, be the meaning of *kūrcena jalam saṃsrāvya* (“having caused to flow together, having mixed”) after “having put down the two *praṇīdhis*”. For this difficult passage see the note by W. Caland, Vaikhānasaśrautasūtram, Calcutta 1929, p. 24, n. 25.

30. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 183 f.

ture of honey, ghee and thick sour milk (*dadhi*) prepared to honour a distinguished person – is to be carried in the same manner (with two *kūrcas*<sup>31</sup>) – see, e.g., ĀgnG. 2, 2, 6: 101, 11 with *parigr̥hya* “taking hold on both sides”; BG. 1, 2, 5 f.: there are as many *kūrcas* as there are officiants and two *parigrahaṇīyau kūrcau*; 1, 2, 19; 26; 30; 33; 40; ĀgnG. 2, 6, 6: 101, 11 – in a brass vessel with a brass cover – used on various solemn occasions<sup>32</sup> – kept on a protected place and accepted by the recipient with both hands, placed “on the navel of the earth”, partaken of three times “for fiery energy, fortune, honour (renown) etc.” (see also ĀpG. 13, 10; 13; MG. 1, 9, 13 f.) and offered in the same way. So the conclusion appears to be that these fluids were considered too sacred to be touched by the hands of the giver or any person other than the recipient. – BhPit. 1, 6, 16 and 18 mention is made of two *kūrcas*, one for carrying the *agnihotra* ladle and one for putting it down (cf. BPit. 1, 6).

An indubitable case of this function of a *kūrca* occurs in the late VaikhG. 4, 11. When an image of Viṣṇu is being installed one performs the *āvāhana*, i.e. the invitation addressed to the god to occupy the image, by taking the clear water that, being in a vessel, is supposed to contain the god (4, 11: 64, 11) – that is, to be possessed of or occupied by his *śakti* (power)<sup>33</sup> – by means of a *kūrca* and pouring the water on the head of the image.

In ĀgnG. 2, 6, 6: 101, 4 (cf. 1, 9 and 11) the three *kūrcas* required for the *madhuparka* – one seat and two for holding a vessel – are together with the sour milk, honey, ghee, vessels and so on placed on and covered by *darbha* (plural). – Remarkably enough, the use of two *parigrahaṇīyau kūrcau* is also prescribed in BG. 1, 2, 5; 19 for taking hold of the vessel containing the water with which a respected guest has to wash his feet.

Similar ritual customs attributable to a fear of contamination are also found in other religions. Sacred objects were or are often touched only with the hand covered to avoid contact with something unclean, not only in Austronesia, but also in ancient Egypt, Greece and Rome<sup>34</sup>. It is clear that in olden times a *kūrca* was, also for practical reasons, a useful utensil, the more so as the material of which it was made was believed to be of special ritual value.

The function of the *kūrca* that is used in the rite described in the late VaikhG. 4, 11: 63, 15 is not easy to define. When an image of Viṣṇu is to be installed one has, to begin with, to call to mind (meditate upon) the god in his complete outward form as being in one’s own heart and in a jar filled with clear water in which one has thrown a *kūrca*, unhusked rice – which represents fortune and the goddess Śrī<sup>35</sup> –, a piece of gold – representing imperishable continued life<sup>36</sup> – and a pearl (or some

31. At JG. 1, 19: 18, 17 a *prastara* (“something spread out, couch etc. consisting of grass”, see ch. XI) is held under the vessel containing the *madhuparka*, another one lies on the vessel; these objects are tied together at their top parts; between them the *dadhi* and the honey are put together in the vessel.

32. See Gonda, Vedic ritual, p. 141.

33. *śaktiyutam*. Caland’s supposition, Vaikhānasasmārtasūtram, translation, p. 117, n. 8 is no doubt right.

34. See A. Dieterich, Kleine Schriften, Leipzig and Berlin 1911, p. 440 f.; F.R. Lehmann, Die polyne-sischen Tabusitten, Leipzig 1930, p. 130.

35. I refer to Gonda, Aspects of early Viṣṇuism, p. 218.

36. For Viṣṇu and ‘immortality’ see, e.g., ibidem, p. 120.

pearls of jewels) – often believed to have a magic power, making its possessor proof against all danger etc.<sup>37</sup>. As to the *kūrca*, is it warranted to recall what in later texts – e.g. SauraPur. 43, 40 – is said on Viṣṇu’s relations with *dūrṇā* grass which is “especially dear to him”? Although it may be supposed that the grass represents Viṣṇu’s fertility aspect<sup>38</sup>, the problem remains to be solved why it should have the form of a *kūrca*. Was this form of grass preferred because it represented a more concentrated manifestation of the plant’s specific property?

When, in a modern, but of course traditional, regular temple ritual (*pūjā*) in South India the water for washing the feet, that for washing the hands and the water for sipping have been arranged, the sacrificial grass in the form of a *kūrca* is addressed and asked to destroy the demons, who intend to spoil the rite, and to bless the rite so that it yields result. Thereupon it is dedicated to the pot with water for the feet in which one has, with appropriate mantras, thrown saffron, white cuscus grass (*lamajja*), sandal, *harialli* grass (*cynodon dactylon*) and white mustard and which is finally consecrated. In similar cases the *kūrca(m)* is, according to Dakṣina-murti Paṭṭar<sup>39</sup>, “a substitute for the deities and for the manes, whenever they are worshipped”. It is (still) made of 5 to 21 *darbha* grass (in odd numbers) twisting them and making a knot on the top. A *kūrca* representing a deity is not necessarily placed in a vessel that contains water; it may be laid at the side of the vessel<sup>40</sup>. Or it is, by way of decoration, to signify that a deity is present in a vessel filled with water<sup>41</sup>. – Among the rites that are still performed in the South is the so-called *pālikai* which is prescribed for the *caula* (the first cutting of a child’s hair), the *upānayana* (initiation), the bath at the return from the teacher, and marriage. It consists of a pot, in which five or nine<sup>42</sup> kinds of grain are allowed to sprout. On the occasion of a wedding it is regarded as the sign of the family-to-be and its growth. Then three, five or seven unmarried women or married women who have children and have not ceased to have menstruation throw three times three seeds sown by men into the *pālikai* together with sacred water (*īrtha*) and *kūrca*s.

Occasionally, a *kūrca* is used as a brush<sup>43</sup>. In a passage which corresponds to ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 5 ff. the author of VaikhŚ. 12, 7: 137, 14 sets forth his opinions with regard to the purification of the patron of a *soma* ceremony: this takes place outside of the *śālā* with 21 (3 × 7, see ĀpŚ. § 7; ŚB. 3, 1, 3, 22) *darbhakūrcaḥ*<sup>44</sup> which are divided into three parts with the mantras *citpatih* etc. (see ĀpŚ. 10, 7, 10 ff.). If, however, they are performing a royal consecration (*rājasūya*) one should use 21 *kūrcaḥ*.

37. For Viṣṇu as a protector see, e.g., *ibidem*, p. 119 f.

38. Gonda, *Aspects*, ch. II.

39. Cited by C.G. Diehl, *Instrument and purpose*, Lund 1956, p. 108, n. 2.

40. This position is also interpreted as a form of protection, for keeping away the demons or for guarding against obstructions (Diehl, *op. cit.*, p. 264).

41. Cf. Diehl, *op. cit.*, p. 110.

42. See Gonda, *Aspects*, p. 94 f. etc.; *Vedic ritual*, p. 39 f. and notice, for instance, the rite of the nine leaves or nine sprouts (*navapatrikā*) in honour of Devī Caṇḍikā (Durgā); see W. Ch. Beane, *Myth, cult and symbols in Śākta Hinduism*, Leiden 1977, p. 57 f.

43. A *kūrca* is, in later literature “a brush for cleaning the teeth”, “a painter’s brush” etc.

44. See p. 79.

The religious significance and relative importance of a *kūrca* – not of any *kūrca* – is also obvious in cases such as SVB. 1, 8, 11 where, in an enumeration of adverse circumstances and inauspicious occurrences necessitating a rite of atonement mention is also made of a destruction of the *kūrca* (without a visible or recognizable cause, cf. § 12). In that case one should refrain from food and pronounce an Agni mantra. – It is also worth noticing that, like the *ḍūrvā*<sup>45</sup>, the *kūrca* is the first of a series of objects enumerated: ŚŚ. 4, 21, 25 “(the host) should successively announce to the guest the *kūrca*, the water for washing the feet, the *arghya*-water, the water for sipping, the *madhuparka*, the cow”<sup>46</sup>: this order was already observed in § 2 ff. For similar passages see HG. 1, 12, 14; BhG. 2, 23: 56, 6. Notice also that the *kūrca* is announced by mentioning its name three times<sup>46</sup>: HG. 1, 12, 16<sup>47</sup>.

The term *kūrca* can also denote a particular kind of penance or rite of atonement. BDh. 4, 5, 25 makes mention of a *brahmakūrca*, KG. 1, 6, 3 f. of a *br̥haspatikūrca*<sup>48</sup>. The former, said to be most purifying or sanctifying (*atipāvanah*), consists in consuming the five products of the cow, a decoction of *kuśa*<sup>49</sup> and barley gruel, the latter, of 21 days’ duration, imposes a similar, but somewhat more complicated diet of which the decoction of *kuśa* is, again, an ingredient<sup>50</sup>. Why are these penances called *kūrca*? According to Devapāla on KG., l.c., the term *kūrca* is used “for the sake of a favourable description”, the “modes of being seated, standing etc. of a penance (*kr̥cchra*) being the same as those (that are usual in connexion) with a *kūrca*”, that is to say it is a euphemism, an instance of the well-known device to mitigate anything unpleasant (and so on). I do not know of a better explanation.

45. See p. 118.

46. For the significance of a threefold performance of a ritual act see J. Gonda, *Triads in the Veda*, Amsterdam Acad. 1976, Index, s.v.

47. No Vedic counterpart (*mutatis mutandis*, of course) is known to me of a custom ascribed to Brahmā in iconographic texts (Mayamata 36, 4 ff.); his image should hold a rosary and *kūrca* in its right, a water-jar and *kuśa* in its left hands.

48. This occurs, e.g., also in LiPur. 25, 7 in combination with a ritual bath and worship of Śiva. In 27, 38 the god is bathed in such water. In 15, 31 the author mentions a ritual bath and drinking *kūrca* before an image of Śiva. In 89, 108 a menstruating woman is enjoined to look at the sun and drink *brahmakūrca*, *pañcagavya* or milk for purification of herself.

49. See p. 47; 91; 97.

50. See W. Gampert, *Die Sühnezeremonien in der altindischen Rechtsliteratur*, Prague 1939, p. 61.

## Bṛsī

The word *bṛsī* (also *br̥sī* and *vr̥sī*) (GG. 4, 2, 26)<sup>1</sup> denotes, according to Sāyaṇa's explanation (on AiĀ. 5, 1, 3), "a particular small (straw) mat (twist of straw or grass) made of grass (*tṛṇa*), creeping plants (*vallī*), palm-leaves, split bamboo and so on". From ŚŚ. 17, 6, 6 it appears, however, that a *bṛsī* was also made of *kuśa*: "some loads of *kuśa* they lay down in the morning for the cushions (*bṛsībhyah*)"<sup>2</sup>. Both passages describe the *mahāvratā* ritual of which this article of furniture – or at least its name – is one of the many striking characteristics: the *hotrakas* (i.e. the assistants of the *hotar*) with the *brahman* (priest) sit down on *bṛsayah* (AiĀ. 1, 2, 4), which are burnt at the proper time (at the end of the ceremony, 5, 3, 2); see also ŚŚ. 17, 4, 7 where these seats are said to be one span high (*pradeśamūtreṇopari bhū-meh*); 17, 14, 6; 17, 17, 4 (the officiants together with the sacrificer); according to BŚ. 16, 20: 266, 8 and 16, 21: 267, 8 the *hotrakas*<sup>3</sup> are seated on *bṛsayah*<sup>4</sup>; see also KŚ. 13, 3, 1 (the officiants except the *hotar* etc.) *bṛsīṣūpaviśanti*, where however the comm. explains the word by "*kūrcaḥ* consisting of *darbha*, particular seats"; yet, *kūrca* is, as we have seen, a more frequent and more general term; *kūrca* is also found in

1. Because of its outward form (*b* and *s*) this word has, not improbably, been regarded as foreign (Wackernagel, *Altind. Grammatik*, I, p. 184; 233; see also Debrunner, *Nachträge zu Band I*, Göttingen 1957, p. 131; and II, 2, Göttingen 1954, p. 386: 935). This has led T. Burrow, in *Siddha-Bhārati*, edited in honour of Siddheshvar Varma, Hoshiarpur 1950, I, p. 110 to assume the existence of an etymological connexion with *barsva* "gums" and *barṣa* "knot", an Iranian origin (cf. *avest. barasman* "cushion etc.") and a common original meaning "thickness, thickening" (see also P. Thieme, in *ZDMG* 92, p. 47 ff., and for other attempts at explaining the origin of these words Mayrhofer, *Etym. Wörterbuch*, II, p. 445; 413). However, notwithstanding their common "thickness" gums, knots and cushions are widely different things and none of these words can easily be considered to have denoted an article of import or to have been introduced through the channel of personal contacts because they were unknown to the Indians or these had no words to indicate them. On the other hand, *bṛsī* is not only in its outward form reminiscent of, but also semantically more or less related to, *bisa* "shoot or stalk of the lotus" and *busa* "chaff, refuse", which are likewise – and in all probability rightly – regarded as foreign elements of unknown origin. Why should they not have been autochthonous?
2. See also *Mbh.* 3, 279, 4 where the royal seer Dyumatsena is seated on a cushion of *kuśa* (*kauśyāṃ bṛsyaṃ*) by a *śāla* tree in his hermitage in a holy wood; for *bṛsyaḥ* in a hermitage see also 3, 263, 22 and 3, 111, 10 where a *kauśī bṛsī* is described as decked with a black deerskin and comfortable and Nilakaṇṭha explains: *kuśāsana* (on 3, 79, 28 he explains: *āsana* {Arjuna's *bṛsī* in the hut of the Pāṇḍavas}); for a *bṛsī* made of flowers of the *śāla* tree see 12, 164, 3.
3. As to the *adhvaryu* see p. 233; 235.
4. Not in *TS.* 7, 5, 8, 5.



the corresponding passages ĀpŚ. 21, 17, 15 and HŚ. 16, 6, 13, and, moreover, in PB. 5, 5, 12 where the comm. identified it with a *bṛsī* (*kūrcān: bṛsīḥ*).

However, at AiĀ. 5, 1, 3 *bṛsī* is used in a sense that seems to be foreign to *kūrca* (at least, as far as this appears from the texts): “they support the posts (of the swing, which is the seat of the *hotar*) by means of branches of *bṛsībhiḥ* which here may be taken to be the material of which a *bṛsī* normally consists (see above)<sup>5</sup>.” Whatever the origin of the *mahāvṛata*, it certainly is an elaborated form of an old popular festival, cult, liturgy, magic, spectacle and public amusement at the same time<sup>6</sup>. The *bṛsī* may originally have been one of its particular requisites and its name been introduced into the vocabulary of the ritualists, because it denoted a special variety of seat, something similar to, but in some respect different from, a *kūrca*. As far as I am able to see the only other Vedic occurrence of the word – in the form *vṛsī* – is in Gobhila’s version of the likewise more or less exceptional *anvaṣṭakya* ritual<sup>7</sup>: on a layer of southward-pointed *kuśa* that is inclined towards the south one places a *vṛsī* and on that cushion (“mat” Oldenberg) one puts a number of sacrificial implements (GG. 4, 2, 23 ff.; *bṛsīm*, KhG. 3, 5, 10).

5. Sāyaṇa, however, regards the branches and the *bṛṣayaḥ* as the means by which dust is thrown into the holes in which the posts are placed. See A.B. Keith, *The Aitareya Aranyaka*, Oxford 1969, p. 272, n. 9, translating “brushwood”.

6. I refer to Keith, *Religion and philosophy*, p. 351 f.; Gonda, *Religionen Indiens*, I<sup>2</sup>, p. 161 f.; P. Rolland, *Le Mahāvṛata*, in *Nachrichten Göttingen* 1973, 3, p. 51 ff.

7. Keith, *op. cit.*, p. 428 f.; Gonda, *Vedic ritual*, p. 455 f.

ABBREVIATIONS

ĀgnG.	Āgniveśya-Gṛhyasūtra	GSP.	Gṛhya-saṃgraha-pariśiṣṭa
AiĀ.	Aitareya-Āraṇyaka	HG.	Hiraṇyakeśi-Gṛhyasūtra
AiB.	Aitareya-Brāhmaṇa	HPit.	Hiraṇyakeśi-Pitṛmedhasūtra
ĀpDh.	Āpastamba-Dharmasūtra	HŚ.	Hiraṇyakeśi-Śrautasūtra
ĀpG.	Āpastamba-Gṛhyasūtra	JB.	Jaiminīya-Brāhmaṇa
ĀpŚ.	Āpastamba-Śrautasūtra	JG.	Jaiminīya-Gṛhyasūtra
ĀśvG.	Āśvalāyana-Gṛhyasūtra	Kāl.	Kālidāsa
ĀśvŚ.	Āśvalāyana-Śrautasūtra	KapS., KKS.	Kapiṣṭhala-(Kaṭha)-Saṃ- hitā
AVP.	Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā, Paip- palāda recension	Kathās(ar).	Kathāsaritāgāra
AVPar.	Atharvaveda-Pariśiṣṭa	KaU.	Kaṭha-Upaniṣad
AVŚ.	Atharvaveda-Saṃhitā, Śau- nakīya recension	Kauś.	Kauśika-Sūtra
BĀU.	Bṛhad-Āraṇyaka-Upaniṣad	KauṣG.	Kauśitaka-Gṛhya
Baudh. Karm.	Baudhāyana, Karmāntasū- tra	KauṣU.	Kauśitakī-Upaniṣad
BaudhPit.	Baudhāyana-Pitṛmedhasū- tra	KauthG.	Kauthuma-Gṛhyasūtra
BD.	Bṛhaddevatā	KB.	Kauśitakī-Brāhmaṇa
BDh.	Baudhāyana-Dharmaśāstra	KG.	Kāṭhaka-Gṛhyasūtra
BG.	Baudhāyana-Gṛhyasūtra	KhG.	Khādīra-Gṛhyasūtra
BGP(ar).	Baudhāyana-Gṛhya-Paribhā- śasūtra	KS.	Kāṭhaka-Saṃhitā
BGŚ.	Baudhāyana-Gṛhya-Śeṣasū- tra	KŚ.	Kātyāyana-Śrautasūtra
BhāgP(ur).	Bhāgavata-Purāṇa	LiP(ur).	Līṅga-Purāṇa
BhavP(ur).	Bhaviṣya-Purāṇa	LŚ.	Lāṭyāyana-Śrautasūtra
BhG.	Bhagavadgītā	MaiU.,	
BhP(it).	Bhāradvāja-Pitṛmedha- (Pitṛmedhika-)Sūtra	MaitrU.	Maitrāyaṇīya-Upaniṣad
BhŚ.	Bhāradvāja-Śrautasūtra	Manu	Manusmṛti or Mānava- Dharmaśāstra
BP(it).	Baudhāyana-Pitṛmedhasū- tra	MārK(ur).	Mārkaṇḍeya-Purāṇa
BŚ.	Baudhāyana-Śrautasūtra	MB.	Mantra-Brāhmaṇa
ChU.	Chāndogya-Upaniṣad	Mbh.	Mahābhārata
DŚ.	Drāhyāyana-Śrautasūtra	MG.	Mānava-Gṛhyasūtra
G(aut)Dh.	Gautama-Dharmaśāstra	MīmS.	Mīmāṃsāsūtra
GautP(it).	Gautama-Pitṛmedhasūtra	MNU.	Māha-Nārāyaṇa-Upaniṣad
GB.	Gopatha-Brāhmaṇa	MS.	Maitrāyaṇī-Saṃhitā
GG.	Gobhila-Gṛhyasūtra	MŚ.	Mānava-Śrautasūtra
GobhS.	Gobhila-Smṛti	MuU.	Muṇḍaka-Upaniṣad
		PB.	Pañcaviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa
		PG.	Pāraskara-Gṛhyasūtra
		PrU.	Praśna-Upaniṣad
		P(ur).	Purāṇa
		Rām.	Rāmāyaṇa
		RV.	R̥gveda-Saṃhitā

RVidh.,	Ṛgvidhāna	U(p).	Upaniṣad
Ṛgvidh.	Ṛgveda Khila	Vādhs.,	
RVKh.	Ṛgveda Khila	Vādhs̄.	Vādhūla-(Śrauta)sūtra
ŚāṅkhDh.	Śāṅkhāyana-Dharmaśāstra	VaikDh.	Vaikhānasa-Dharmaśāstra
ŚB.	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa	VaikhG.	Vaikhānasa-Gṛhyasūtra
ŚBK.	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Kāṇva recension	VaikhŚ.	Vaikhānasa-Śrautasūtra
ŚBM.	Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa, Mādhyandina recension	Vait(S).	Vaitāna-Sūtra
SB.	Ṣaḍviṃśa-Brāhmaṇa	VārŚ.	Vārāha-Śrautasūtra
ŚG.	Śāṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra	VāsDh.	Vāsiṣṭha-Dharmaśāstra
ŚŚ.	Śāṅkhāyana Śrautasūtra	VG., Vā(r)G.	Vārāha-Gṛhyasūtra
Śulbas.	Śulbasūtra	VGP.	Vārāhagrhyapuruṣa
SV.	Sāmaveda	ViDh.	Viṣṇu-Dharmaśāstra
SVB.	Sāmavidhāna-Brāhmaṇa	ViDhP(ur).	Viṣṇudharmottara-Purāṇa
ŚvU.	Śvetāsvatara-Upaniṣad	ViP(ur).	Viṣṇu-Purāṇa
TA.	Taittirīya-Āraṇyaka	ViS(m).	Viṣṇu-Smṛti
TB.	Taittirīya-Brāhmaṇa	VS.	Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā
TriśBrU.	Triśikhibrāhmaṇopaniṣad	VŚ., Vā(r)Ś.	Vārāha-Śrautasūtra
TS.	Taittirīya-Saṃhitā	VSK.	Vājasaneyi-Saṃhitā, Kāṇva recension
		Yājñ.	Yājñavalkya-Smṛti

- ablution, 115  
 abundance, 159  
 Aditi, 19, 153, 160, 163, 164, 169, 173, 188, 189  
 Agni, 8, 18, 20, 22–24, 36, 62, 64, 68, 72, 73, 76, 78, 81, 91, 108, 111, 116–118, 123, 125, 127, 129, 130, 131, 133 f., 137, 140, 141, 143, 144, 145, 146, 153, 170, 172, 180, 181, 184, 188, 190, 193, 203, 205–207 f., 209, 212, 214, 218, 222, 224, 236, 240  
 altar, 182, 228  
 amulet, talisman, 6, 39, 42, 53–55, 86, 112, 114, 118, 121, 132, 137  
 analogy, 16, 20  
 analogy (prefigurative, suggestive), 15, 117, 121, 136  
 anger, 54  
 animal sacrifice, 35, 62, 82, 92, 156, 167, 170–172, 178, 189, 190, 209  
 animal victim, 11, 14, 17, 20, 26, 40, 41, 47, 82, 94, 99, 153, 156, 168, 188, 190, 194, 196, 209, 225, 237  
 animals, 58 f., 60, 71, 158, 173, 179  
 anointing, 83, 104, 118, 153, 204, 205, 215  
 ant, 27, 57, 59, 109  
 antelope, 60, 68, 70, 72, 126, 127, 178, 218  
 anthill, 57 f., 106  
 apotropaic function, power, 80, 162  
 appeasement, 22, 23, 32, 41, 48, 53, 62, 82, 106, 138, 179, 184, 216  
 argumentum e silentio, 148 fn., 228 fn.  
 army, 136  
 arrow, 18, 85, 94, 171, 210  
 ass, 72  
 association, 18, 189  
 asuras, 16, 84, 171, 173, 224  
 Aśvins, 91, 142, 146, 153, 158, 162, 170, 192  
 atonement, 32, 129, 183, 213, 240  
 authorization, 45, 213  
 autumn, 189–191  
 axis mundi, 5, 36, 74, 75, 122, 228  
 Bali (ile of), 48 fn.  
 bamboo, 25, 58, 61, 62, 111, 122, 200, 241  
 bare ground, 14, 69, 83, 173  
 barley, 6, 9, 34, 48, 49, 53, 71, 72, 82, 91, 110, 111, 118, 120, 131, 153, 235, 240  
 barring the way, 92  
 bath, bathing, 13 f., 22, 41, 42, 48 fn., 64, 77, 90, 114, 118, 138, 181, 184, 191, 235, 239  
 beard, 210  
 begging bowl, 35  
 binding, fastening, tying, 11, 12, 98, 105, 125, 126, 132, 156, 163, 164, 166, 182, 185, 186  
 birds, 31, 141, 205  
 birth, 45, 123, 161  
 blood, 20, 47, 237  
 boar, 63 f., 84 f., 114, 225  
 body, 189, 190  
 bond, 35  
 Brahmā, 74, 103  
 brahmin, 60, 70, 73, 74, 173, 174, 183, 203  
 branch, 91, 207  
 breath, breathing, 31, 42, 68, 71, 81, 117, 201, 204, 206, 222  
 Bṛhaspati, Brahmanaspati, 162, 183, 214  
 brick, 115, 116, 200 fn.  
 bride, 56 f., 59, 71 f., 75, 88, 95, 103, 110, 135 f., 161  
 bridegroom, 234  
 bridle, 30, 130  
 broom, 12, 27, 30, 122, 126, 127, 130, 167  
 brush, brushing, 100, 239  
 building, 46, 71  
 building-materials, 12  
 burial ground, 109  
 burning grass or utensils, 80, 180, 207, 212  
 butter, 31, 32, 58, 70, 83, 93, 104, 105, 111, 120, 138, 153, 166, 190, 191, 204, 210

- cake(s) (sacrificial), 17, 127, 166, 168, 188, 203, 221, 226
- canc, 127
- catheter, 122, 132
- cattle, 19, 31, 35, 59, 81, 108, 111, 116, 117, 123, 135, 156, 167, 186, 189, 190, 192, 201, 207, 209, 210, 218, 220
- centre, 46, 74, 173, 174, 228, 229
- chanting, 175, 177–179, 213
- chariot, 94
- childbirth (see also pregnancy), 122
- chthonian powers, 20, 58
- circumambulation, 189, 211
- classification, 51, 107
- clay, 124 f.
- cleaning, cleansing, 11, 12, 19, 20, 25, 31, 65, 76, 80, 81, 119, 162
- clipped grass, 20 f., 57
- clods of clay (earth), 55, 116
- cloth, clothes, garment, 12, 35 f., 44, 77, 97, 105, 124, 126, 131, 161, 171, 173
- cohabitation, 42
- collyrium, 83, 103, 104
- colour, 41
- completeness, completion, 115, 116, 123, 166
- conciliation, 6, 8
- confirmation, 160
- conflagration, 108, 137
- conjoint growth, 45
- consecration, 24, 34, 40, 44, 64–66, 74, 76, 85, 87, 105, 109, 112, 114, 115, 119, 124, 126, 160–162, 164, 167, 169, 183, 188, 203, 211, 212, 226
- contact, 20, 21, 35, 47, 62, 80, 86, 149 fn., 159, 166, 173, 174, 180, 216, 221, 238
- contamination, 40, 77, 110, 117, 238
- continued life, 5, 238
- continuity, continuation, 164 f., 167, 170, 175 f., 181, 186, 223
- copulation, 81, 160, 166, 200, 222, 226, 227
- correlation, 209 f.
- correspondence, 211
- couch, 151
- cover(ing), 34, 72
- cow, 16, 25, 43, 50, 58 f., 60, 63, 82, 88, 104, 105, 126, 151, 156, 160, 161, 163, 173, 205, 224 fn., 235, 240
- cowdung, 13, 39, 43, 45, 47, 50, 71, 74, 83, 104, 110, 118, 121, 128, 136
- creation, 73
- creeping plants, 35
- cremation, 13, 91 f., 95, 106, 151, 216, 221
- crossroads, 35
- cure, 105
- curse, 15, 118
- cushion, 34, 233, 241
- cut off (grass-ends), 20, 126, 219
- cutting (grass), 14, 15, 38, 43, 52, 80, 151, 156 f., 160, 163 fn., 168, 178, 185, 188
- Dadhikrāvan, 89 f.
- danger, 74, 81, 239
- Darbha, 99
- daughter, 206 f.
- death, deceased, 12, 27, 37–40, 45, 48, 59, 69–71, 75, 77, 79, 83, 86, 91, 110, 111, 119, 133, 138, 139, 149 fn., 151, 175, 181, 185, 191, 196, 197, 211, 216
- defective, deficient, 178
- defilement, 43, 98
- demon(s), 6, 8, 17, 20, 21, 37, 39, 71, 75, 111, 114, 137, 155, 159, 177, 202, 203, 239
- Dhūrta, 75
- dignity, 233 f.
- disability, 109
- disease, 16, 48, 53, 75, 91, 110, 118, 122, 124, 130 f., 132, 206
- distress, 52
- double-folded grass, 70
- double performance, 93 f., 176
- double result, 185
- dream, 115
- duality, 176
- earth, Earth, 19, 62, 114, 116, 160, 164, 167, 169, 174, 185, 188, 189, 196, 213, 217, 225–230
- east, 25, 26, 33, 34, 36, 42, 45, 69–72, 78, 79, 84, 86, 121, 129, 142, 143, 153, 157, 161, 164–168, 172, 173, 175, 199, 202, 207, 223, 226, 227, 234, 235
- economic significance, 192 f.
- economy, 15
- effigy, 16
- elephant(s), 85, 109
- eliminatory rite, 17, 47, 49, 80, 118, 211
- embryo, 60, 126, 129, 163, 185, 213
- enemy, 16, 21, 37, 56, 80, 132, 138, 171, 183
- enumeration, 240
- etymology, 28, 29, 52, 85 fn., 100, 108 fn., 122 fn., 133 fn., 135 fn., 137 fn., 148, 171, 189 fn., 194, 195, 224, 230 f., 232 fn., 241 fn.
- euphemism, 240
- even number, 58, 70, 155 fn., 176 fn., 198
- evil, 6, 8, 12, 16, 17, 21, 32, 41, 42, 48, 53, 55, 60, 76, 77, 82, 86, 91, 106, 109, 110,



- 114, 115, 122–124, 131, 137, 152, 160, 175, 184, 216
- exemplary event, 226
- expiation, 58, 65, 104, 105, 114, 118, 119, 213
- eyebrows, 88
- eyelashes, 171
- eyesight, 192
- Fathers, 15, 20, 36–38, 42, 48, 70, 79, 98, 138, 141, 146, 147, 151, 153, 168, 169, 172, 174, 176, 184 f., 185, 188 f., 191, 197, 211, 236, 237
- fecundity, fertility, 6, 40, 75, 82, 110, 111, 136, 159, 239
- fever, 152
- fire, 13 f., 19, 20, 27, 32, 34–37, 49, 55, 58, 68, 69, 71, 73, 76–78, 80, 95, 97, 98, 104, 108, 111, 112, 127–131, 133, 136, 140, 141, 150, 152, 175, 177, 181, 184, 188, 191, 193, 206 f., 208–210, 212, 214, 215, 227, 234, 237
- firedrill, 129
- fireplace (great), see *agnicayana*
- five, 166, 168
- flower(s), 6, 21, 98, 108, 118, 120, 133
- food, fodder (grass etc.), 11, 17 f., 27, 46, 58, 59, 62, 78, 88, 105, 117, 119, 120, 123, 142, 145, 153, 172, 173, 181, 189, 190, 218, 237, 240
- foundation (firm), see *pratiṣṭhā*
- four, 16, 84, 111, 123
- fragrant objects, 119, 120, 137, 138, 143
- frog, 61
- fruits, 5, 6, 40, 188
- fuel, 13, 32, 37 fn., 63, 76, 136, 152, 154, 155, 165–169, 182, 183, 188, 199, 227
- full and new moon (rites of), 18, 19, 23, 24, 68, 69, 125, 152, 156, 164, 169, 172, 174, 178, 181, 184, 190, 197, 207, 217, 218, 221, 223, 225
- function and significance of grass, 156 ff.
- funeral (pile, ritual etc.), 50, 59, 91, 95, 103, 104, 106, 110, 127, 151
- furrow, 138
- garland, 35, 85, 118
- Germans, 62
- ghee, 50, 104, 120, 129, 132, 136, 142, 153, 163, 203, 212, 219, 238
- gift, 42, 90 f.
- girding, girdle, girth, 6, 27, 30, 46, 57, 123 f., 125, 131, 132, 134, 135, 139, 160, 161, 188, 223
- goat, 62, 90, 100, 126
- gods, 79, 141, 142, 143, 145, 147, 156, 168, 172, 173, 187, 190, 220, 230
- gold, 6, 22, 23, 35, 36, 46, 86, 87, 112, 114, 127, 133, 163, 171, 173, 184, 234, 238
- grass(es) in daily life, in general, 9–11
- Greece, Greeks, 6, 8, 238
- ground, 108 fn.
- guest, 12, 71, 151, 233, 234, 238
- hair, 40, 45, 47, 64 fn., 71, 83, 105, 116, 134, 151, 186, 187, 199, 210, 221, 222, 239
- hair-cutting, 82
- hair-knot, 158
- hand(s), 19, 33, 43, 44, 213, 236–239
- harmony, 203 fn., 205
- healing, 162
- head, 118
- headache, 130
- health, 5
- heaven, 18, 21, 163, 173, 176–178, 180, 182, 183, 185, 204–209, 211–214, 228, 229, 234
- hemp, 53, 80, 98, 123, 125 fn., 126, 129, 132, 134, 139
- hermit, 33, 35, 47, 97, 98
- hide, skin, 35, 36, 60, 65, 68, 70, 72, 119, 127, 135, 218
- holding grass in the hand, 21, 22, 42, 46, 58, 69, 74, 85, 86, 112, 113 f., 115, 119, 121, 130, 171, 198, 204–206, 213, 216
- holy water, 169
- homologation, equation, 117, 185, 186, 188–190, 209, 221
- honorific, 112
- horn, 126
- horse, 93, 166, 167, 177, 179, 212
- horse's rib, 156 f.
- house, 85, 103, 108, 109, 137, 138, 169, 179
- hundred, 115, 125
- hunting-party, 178
- identification, identity, 18, 31, 81, 123, 124, 158–160, 178, 185–189, 199, 201, 204, 209, 221, 226
- image(s), 16, 34 fn., 49, 70 fn., 73–75, 109, 112, 238
- imitation, 178
- imposition, 118
- impurity, 100, 125, 139, 160, 216
- incantation, 171
- Indo-Europeans, 8 f., 149
- Indra, 12, 53, 59, 60, 64, 75, 81, 84 f., 91, 93, 119, 126, 140–142, 145, 146, 152–154, 157, 160, 162, 170, 187, 192, 193, 204, 207

f., 212, 214, 225  
 Indrāṇī, 136 f., 160, 161, 185  
 initiation, 42, 44, 85, 125, 234  
 injury, 16, 157, 162, 183, 198  
 insomnia, 110  
 interchangeability, 24, 97  
 Iran, Iranians, 8, 148 f.

journey, 9, 19, 40, 112, 210

Kātyāyana, 101 f., 106  
 Ketu, 51  
 kindling fire, 76, 77, 79, 128, 145, 146, 155,  
 175, 218  
 king, 141, 183  
 knee, 186  
 kneeling, 33, 43, 85, 86, 104  
 knot, 161 f., 163, 164, 211, 239  
 knowledge, 190

ladles, 153, 203, 206, 220  
 lap, 173, 223, 224, 226  
 leg, 214  
 life (full length of), 109, 111, 125, 127, 206,  
 215  
 lighting, illumination, 13, 77, 128 fn.  
 loop, 123, 127  
 lotus, 72, 108 f.  
 lump of clay or earth, 7, 114, 118, 125  
 lustration, 109, 118

magic, magician, 16, 18, 20, 31, 37, 45, 54,  
 56 ff., 85, 87, 124, 132  
 Mahāpuruṣa, 234  
 malevolent purposes, 50, 57, 183  
 mantra, 60  
 Manyu, 132, 192  
 Maruts, 146, 170  
 mat, 27, 32, 133, 163, 196, 241  
 materialization, 17  
 measure(s), 198, 200  
 medicine, 31 fn., 53, 58, 137  
 menstruation, 239  
 milk, 13, 31, 47, 49, 61, 68, 72, 126, 184, 186  
 misfortune, 76, 137, 138, 203  
 Mitra, 128, 144, 183  
 moon (new), 111  
 morning (early), 142, 144, 153, 154  
 mourning-garment, 77  
 mustard, 6, 34, 49, 118, 138, 239  
 mystic bond, 44

nakedness, 37  
 name, 169

Namuci, 38  
 navel, 83, 221, 223, 228 f., 238  
 needle, 103  
 nine, 210, 235  
 Nirṛti, 56, 137  
 noose, 160, 191  
 north, 14, 19, 27, 33 fn., 34, 69–71, 84, 157,  
 164, 165, 167, 175, 175, 202, 213  
 nudity, 164, 187

oath, 113  
 oblation, libation, offering, 85, 89, 98, 106,  
 111, 118, 141, 146, 147, 161, 162, 165,  
 170, 180, 183, 190, 218  
 odour, 16, 80, 85  
 offspring, 19, 59, 73, 87, 111, 144, 158, 161,  
 165–167, 185, 186, 189, 191, 192, 200,  
 201, 205, 221, 223, 227  
 ointment, 32, 66, 105  
 omina, 110  
 omission, 166, 191, 211  
 organs, 186

pair(s), (see also two), 92 ff., 112, 165, 176,  
 191, 222  
 Pañcālas, 99, 100, 106  
 panholders, 124  
 parallelism, 159  
 parasol, 68, 75  
 Parāvasu, 16 f.  
 passage rites, 124  
 patron (*yajamāna*), 18, 19, 21, 23, 24, 26, 40,  
 59, 64, 66, 69, 76, 81, 83, 84, 87, 89, 103,  
 105, 117, 121, 123, 124, 126–128, 148,  
 155, 158, 161–164, 166, 167, 174, 177–  
 179, 182, 183, 185, 188–190, 192, 193,  
 196, 197, 199, 201–211, 213, 221, 222,  
 224, 226, 227, 239, 241

pearl, 238 f.  
 penance, 42, 240  
 penis, 187  
 perfection, 166  
 physical contact, 19  
 physiology, 210  
 pillar, 74, 174, 175  
 pit, 72, 108, 176  
 planets, 51  
 plants, 159, 164, 167, 170, 174, 184, 187–  
 190, 192, 222, 236  
 playing, 15  
 ploughing, 46  
 poison, 55  
 pole (sacred), 5  
 portent(s), 15, 89, 106, 138

- post, stake (sacrificial), 35, 36, 40, 57, 82, 93, 151, 159, 171, 175, 209, 214
- Prajāpati, 8, 17, 21, 73, 92, 103, 116, 156, 171, 174, 176, 178 fn., 179, 187, 192, 199, 200, 212, 219, 222, 225, 228 fn.
- precaution, 219
- preference, 101, 106
- prefiguration, 17 f., 91
- pregnancy, pregnant, 24, 32 fn., 70, 88, 122, 159
- pressing stone, 187
- prevention, 15, 158
- procession, 178, 179
- procreation, 78, 81, 129, 158, 160, 165 f., 185–187, 192, 226
- productivity, 186
- prognostication, 35, 58, 88 f., 122
- property, 156
- propitiation, 35, 43, 77, 83, 92, 119, 129, 183
- prosperity, 6, 16, 40, 44, 57, 59, 80, 85, 93, 105, 111, 116, 129, 160, 161, 163, 170, 185, 210, 216, 229
- protection, 6, 14, 19, 21, 32 fn., 41, 42, 49, 54, 55, 69, 71, 80, 82, 84–86, 92, 98, 112, 114, 118, 124, 127, 141, 161, 162, 167, 174, 175, 177, 179, 191, 205, 208, 211, 213, 218, 224, 237–239
- prototype, 217
- pupil, student, 12, 33, 41, 43 f., 50, 56, 85, 90 f., 104, 118, 119, 124, 234
- purification, 6, 17, 23, 25, 31, 32 fn., 39, 42, 43, 47, 49, 55, 60 f., 62, 65–69, 71, 74–83, 85, 89, 92, 103, 105, 113, 114, 120, 127, 138, 154, 169, 175, 176, 216, 227, 239, 240
- purity, 86, 100, 164, 184
- Purūravas and Urvaśī, 129 f.
- Pūṣan, 48, 131, 153, 161 f., 163
- race, 117
- Rāhu, 51, 117
- rain, rains, 59, 170, 184, 191, 205, 206, 256
- rebirth (ritual), 16, 124, 126
- reception, 234, 237
- recitation, 86, 137
- red, 131
- reed, 122, 123, 130, 171, 186
- regeneration, 95
- regions of the universe, 223, 229, 235
- regular order, 165
- reinterpretation, 20, 44, 124, 131, 178, 211 fn., 231
- remains, remnant, residue, 39, 58, 83, 84, 111, 112, 164, 175, 184, 207, 209, 223
- renewal, 169
- representation, 76, 188, 189, 191, 202
- (re)sounding holes, 175, 186
- rice, 6, 15, 17, 53, 71, 79, 95, 103, 110, 111, 120, 173, 181, 235, 239
- right side, 177, 214
- ring, 42 fn.
- rinsing, 100
- ritual sphere, 104
- rival, 81, 158, 183, 230
- river, 85
- Rome, Romans, Roman antiquity, 6, 9, 44 f., 46, 62, 74, 89, 113, 164, 182, 238
- root(s) (of grass etc.), 20, 21, 33 fn., 37–39, 46, 54, 64, 70, 77, 80, 83, 88, 112, 115, 116, 120, 137, 164, 168, 169, 188 f., 203, 215, 236
- rope, cord, string, 35, 49, 56 f., 59, 60, 64, 65, 75 f., 77, 91, 92, 94, 105, 122, 123, 126, 127, 130, 131, 133, 156, 160, 161, 164, 182, 185, 188, 222
- row (of grass), 95, 166
- rubbing, 225 f.
- Rudra, 6, 22, 31, 35, 47, 49, 83, 105, 109, 111, 112, 130, 144, 183, 194, 234, 237
- Śabalī, 88
- sacred thread, *see yajñopavīta*
- sacrifice running away, 178, 212
- sacrificer, *see patron*
- sacrificial ground, 140, 141, 187
- sacrificial horse, 49, 65, 75 f., 123, 154 f.
- safety, 118, 163
- sand, 27, 46, 120, 127, 215
- sandal, 239
- Sarasvatī, 75, 141, 151, 153, 187, 192
- Savitār, 158, 170, 187, 202
- seasons, 189, 190
- seat, seated, sitting down, 12, 17, 33, 39, 46, 49, 69, 85, 98, 100, 105, 112, 113, 119, 121, 124, 140, 141, 145, 148, 151, 153, 154, 157, 164, 165, 168, 172, 173, 181, 186, 189, 192, 202, 203, 209, 216, 230, 232 ff., 235, 236, 238, 241
- secular properties, technique etc., 14, 51
- seed(s), 46
- Self (Universal), 187 (spiritual), 207
- selling grass, 15
- semen, 78, 161, 177, 186, 191, 200, 214, 222
- sepulchral mound, 138
- serpents, snakes, 55 f., 81, 119, 122
- servant, 34 f.
- sesame, 15, 30, 48, 49, 110, 114, 194
- seven, 31, 82
- sexual parallelism, relation, 81, 129

- shaving, 14, 40, 83, 87  
 sheath, 138 f.  
 shoots, sprouts, 99, 112, 128, 158, 159, 171, 185, 210  
 silent performance, 160, 211  
 silver, 112, 114, 159, 173  
 site (of a house), 63  
 Śiva, 16, 109, 112 fn.  
 Skanda, 75  
 skirt, 35, 43, 100  
 sling, 123  
 smelling, 26, 85, 173  
 social classes, 63, 113  
 social significance, 192 f.  
 Soma, 51, 52, 130, 146, 152, 170, 179, 183, 193, 212, 213  
 soma sacrifice (see also *soma*), 40, 48, 77 f., 80, 120, 123, 170, 171, 181, 184, 186, 191, 197, 212, 218, 223 f., 226, 239  
 son, 88, 207  
 south, 16, 17, 20, 27, 33, 69, 70, 73, 74, 79, 97, 167, 168, 176, 177, 189, 213, 236  
 south-east, 79, 215  
 south-west, 164  
 speech, 190  
 spell, 56  
 spilling, 14, 36, 159, 163, 177, 194, 214, 219  
 spirits, 84, 123, 131, 162, 177  
 spoon(s), 166–169, 180, 184, 190, 191, 202–204, 209, 214, 219, 236  
 spreading or strewing grass, 12, 24–26, 37, 39, 50, 69, 77, 79, 95, 97, 136, 140, 142, 145, 146, 150, 151, 156, 164–167, 174, 186, 188, 189, 194, 198, 211, 223 f., 227  
 sprinkling, 31, 32, 36, 37, 42 fn., 43 f., 48, 61, 65, 66, 71, 80, 86, 92, 93, 104, 106, 119, 120, 131, 136, 138, 145, 155, 156, 164–169, 175, 185, 186, 201, 210, 223, 237  
 Śrī, 238  
 staff, 89  
 stirring, 68  
 stone, 110  
 stool, 233  
 strainer, straining, 31, 61, 65, 68, 70, 127  
 straw, 11, 13, 19, 137, 155  
 striking, 88  
 stubbles, 95, 158, 185  
 substitute, 15, 18, 49, 50, 80, 101, 104, 106, 135, 211  
 success, 158, 165, 173  
 sugar-cane, 8, 120, 171  
 sun, 13, 22, 23, 86, 92, 112, 114, 118, 162, 230  
 support(er), 193, 202  
 Sūrya, 207 f., 214, 224  
 swearing, 113 f.  
 sweeping, 126  
 swing, 59 f., 75, 127, 234, 235, 242  
 symbolism, 7, 17, 18, 27, 30, 95, 113, 114, 180, 213  
 synonymity, 97 ff.  
 teacher, 12, 16, 43 f., 50, 85, 90 f., 118, 234  
 tearing off (grass), 151  
 tether, 126, 127  
 thatch, 135, 137  
 third, 186 fn.  
 thousand, 115, 116  
 thread, 87, 223 fn.  
 three (times etc.), 84, 110, 123–125, 127, 160, 164, 167, 169, 189, 191, 200, 204, 206–208, 211, 215, 226, 229, 234, 239, 240  
 threefold (*darbha* etc.), 68, 127, 144, 166, 186, 240  
 throne, 232, 233 fn.  
 throwing (grass), 17, 18 f., 20–22, 24 f., 27, 80, 81, 83, 84, 89, 90, 111, 128 fn., 131, 138, 142, 175–177, 180, 181, 188, 194, 206 f., 208, 210–212, 215, 220, 239  
 Tibetan Buddhists, 48 f. fn.  
 tip or top (of grass), 65, 78, 80, 82, 84, 109–111, 115, 116, 132, 165, 206, 219 f., 221, 235  
 tonsure, 40 f., 47, 83, 104, 105, 239  
 tools, 157  
 top-knot, tuft of hair, see *stūpa*  
 torch, 13  
 totality, 92, 115, 116, 164, 166  
 touching, 18, 19, 24 f., 26, 45, 47, 82, 87 f., 119, 138, 159, 162, 175, 177, 184, 208, 211–213, 221, 226, 229, 238  
 transference, transmission (of power), 20, 33, 44, 45, 56, 87–89, 91, 123, 130, 154, 157 fn., 161, 173, 204, 208, 211, 221, 222, 225 f.  
 tree, 5 f., 37, 40, 45, 48 fn., 59, 62, 67, 74, 82, 89, 90, 95, 106, 117, 130, 187, 188  
 triad, tripartition, 166, 203  
 tripartite universe, 202, 203, 207  
 triunity, 186  
 trunk (of a tree), 106  
 tuft of grass, 12, 13, 64, 83, 100, 158, 159  
 Tvaṣṭar, 63, 170  
 two blades of grass, stalks etc., 21, 45, 63, 65, 66, 71, 72, 78, 119, 165, 175, 176, 194, 201, 204, 210, 218, 237, 238  
 underlayer, 175, 176, 194

- universe (also structure of the), 46, 112, 119, 134, 166, 167, 186, 202, 204, 207  
 urine, 47, 98, 122, 132  
 Uṣas, 162  
  
 variation, 23, 26  
 Varuṇa, 113, 144, 152, 160, 177, 191  
 Vāyu, 13, 20, 118, 144, 224, 236  
 Veda (study, recitation of the, etc.), 22, 32, 42, 45, 48, 63, 69, 75, 85, 90, 97, 117, 119  
 vegetation, 5  
 verbal taboo, 99  
 Vināyaka, 118  
 Viṣṇu, 6, 16, 35, 49, 63, 65, 67, 69, 70, 84, 92, 98, 104, 109, 110, 112, 114, 158, 169, 170, 186, 198–200, 203, 204, 225, 234, 235, 238, 239  
 vital power, 6  
 vitality, 59  
 vow, 113, 156  
 Vṛtra, 60, 61, 119, 212  
  
 war-drum, 138  
 warming, 80  
 washing, 48, 119, 131, 238–240  
 water, 17, 26, 34, 36, 37, 45, 46, 48, 60, 61, 70, 80, 91, 100, 108, 110–113, 117–119, 130, 133, 145, 146, 153–155, 164, 170, 175, 177, 184, 188, 191, 213, 236, 238–240  
 water-plants, 192  
  
 waters (primaeval), 31, 36, 59, 60 f., 65, 140, 162, 170  
 wedding, 6, 34, 56 f., 64, 71, 79, 88, 95, 105, 109, 110, 135, 161, 215, 239  
 welfare, 14, 111  
 west, 23, 33, 88, 134, 166–169, 185, 203, 227, 234  
 wicker-work, 99, 135, 237  
 wife (of the patron), 35, 43, 77, 81, 100, 125, 155, 160, 164, 166, 199, 208, 222, 223, 226  
 wind, 201  
 winnowing basket, 38, 163  
 wiping, 236, 237  
 wisps of grass, 25  
 witchcraft, 103, 171  
 woman, 187  
 womb, 222  
 wood, 18, 21, 175, 218  
 wood splinters, 79, 184  
 wooden sword (*sp̥hya*), 9, 12, 14, 23, 24, 80, 84, 93 f., 120, 171, 226  
 wool, 49, 98, 100, 142, 153, 165, 202  
 worm(s), 56, 138  
 wreath, 6, 109  
  
 Yama, 151, 197, 215, 216  
 Yamayaḥjña, 172  
 yoke, 127  
 yoke-halter, 125  
 yoke-hole, 75  
 yoke-ropc, 56, 161



- agnicayana, 23, 25, 29 fn., 30, 32, 34, 46,  
 61-63, 65, 68, 72, 73 fn., 87, 92, 106, 112,  
 117, 120, 123, 124, 127, 128, 163, 213, 214  
 agnimukha, 24  
 agniṣṭoma, 85, 105, 124, 126, 127, 167, 227  
 agnihotra, 13, 19, 22, 39, 58, 61, 104, 165,  
 174, 181, 187, 196, 210, 235, 236, 238  
 agnīdh, āgnīdhra, 18-20, 25, 164-168, 171,  
 205-208, 211, 212, 218, 221  
 agnyādhāna, agnyādheya, 69, 76, 129  
 acchinnaparṇa, 53, 66  
 aṅjali, 45, 111, 172, 207, 222, 223  
 adṛṣṭa, 58  
 adhvaryu, 7, 8, 12-14, 17-25, 33, 34, 36, 39,  
 40, 45, 61, 65, 66, 68, 78, 79, 81, 82, 84,  
 87, 89, 91, 93, 119, 120, 127-129, 144,  
 146, 155, 156, 158-162, 164-167, 169,  
 171, 175-181, 183, 184, 194, 198-208,  
 210-212, 217-222, 225, 226, 228, 229,  
 233, 235, 241 fn.  
 anadhas, 163  
 anirukta, 73 fn.  
 anupravṛṇakti, 18  
 anuyāja, 191, 192, 202, 203  
 anūjjāvarī, 59  
 antara, 161 fn.  
 annādyam, 17  
 anvaṣṭakya, 64, 72, 97, 105  
 anvārabh-, 88  
 apāmārga, 138  
 aponaptrīya, 170  
 abhicāra, 50  
 abhijit, 194  
 abhidhānī, 126, 127  
 abhyātāna, 37  
 amati, 189  
 amṛta(m), 46, 59, 62, 73, 236  
 ayātayāma, 61  
 aruṇadūrvā, 108 fn.  
 arka, 51, 72, 125 fn.  
 argha, 49, 237  
 arghya, 98 fn., 118, 240  
 arjuna, 134, 139 fn.  
 arjunastamba, 106  
 arjunādāra, 50  
 avakā, 37, 61, 65, 171  
 avabhṛtha, 13  
 avastaraṇa, 175  
 aśmantaka, 139  
 aśvattha, 6, 53, 89, 112, 219  
 aśvamedha, 75, 166, 167, 171, 233  
 aśvavāla, 50, 139 fn., 171, 179 fn., 212  
 asaṃskṛta, 175  
 ahimsā, 41, 202  
 āghāra, 237  
 ācārya, 33, 44  
 ājya, 66  
 ājyatantra, 197  
 ātithyabarhis, 184  
 ātithyeṣṭī, 170, 171, 212, 213  
 ātman, 221  
 ādāra, 100, 139 fn.  
 āprī, 142, 190  
 āyatana, 116, 133, 170, 204, 211, 229  
 āvahana, 234, 238  
 āsandī, 124, 127, 136, 233-235  
 āhavanīya, 8, 19, 20, 22, 32, 46, 76, 77, 79,  
 80, 89, 95, 96, 120, 129, 156, 162, 163,  
 180-183, 201, 203 f., 206-208, 220, 222,  
 223, 227, 235, 236  
 iṅgiḍa, 132, 137  
 iṅḍu, iṅḍva, 34, 75  
 idhma, 155  
 idhmābarhis, 155, 165 fn.  
 indriya, 162, 192  
 iṣikā, 122, 125, 137  
 iṣur iṣṭi, 210  
 iṣṭaka, 116

iṣṭi, 79, 198, 210, 211, 220, 224

ukhā, 34, 72, 127, 128, 160, 161  
ugra, 53–55

utkara, 20, 25, 81, 84, 218, 220

uttarabārhī, 196

uttaravedī, 46, 95, 172, 189, 215

uttāpanīya, 78

udaka, 130

udakamaṇḍala, 75

udakaśānti, 31, 121

udayanīya, 181

udumbara, 34, 40, 65, 75, 82, 83, 89, 124,

125, 127, 136, 174, 175, 194, 235

udumbarastamba, 112

udgātar, 175–178, 214, 233 fn.–235

udbārhī, 214 f.

udbhīd, 210

upadīka, 59

upanayana, 79, 132, 234, 239

upabārhaṇa, 179 fn.

upabhṛt, 219

upayamana, 219 fn.

upaveśa, 68

upasads, 212

upasthāna, 22

upolapa, 94

upolava, 68, 77, 94, 101

uru, 162 fn.

ulapa, 28, 94, 95, 134, 171

ulaparāji, 95, 96

ulmuka, 95

ullekhana, 64 fn.

uśīra, 50, 137, 138

uṣṇīṣa, 49, 161

ūrj, 6, 13, 59, 123, 124, 167, 220

ūrdhvam, 207

ūrdhvaliṅga, 207 fn.

ṛtuśānti, 121

ṛṣī(s), 162

ekadhana, 26, 119

ekādaśinī, 24

erakā, 172

ojas, 54, 129, 143

ośadhī, 11 fn., 13, 18, 21, 26, 37–39, 41, 53,  
59, 60, 68, 187, 188

kaṭa, 133, 139 fn.

kārṣmārya, 168, 171

kāśa, 28, 35, 37, 50, VIII

kāśastamba, 106

kuṇḍa, 37 fn.

kutapa, 38, 50, 99 f., 139 fn.

kudī, 131 f.

kulāya, 129

kuśa, 6, 14, 23, 26–28, III, 52, 64, 70, 75, 77,

78, 92, V (also compounds), 118, 120,

126, 127, 133–135, 138, 139, 143 fn., 155

fn., 157, 173, 175, 235–237, 240, 241

kuśakaṇṭhaka, 29

kuśataruṇa, 27, 32, 40, 41, 61, 101

kuśatoya, 47

kuśadarbha, 98

kuśadhvaja, 74

kuśapavitra, 101

kuśapīṅjūla, 41, 97

kuśapṛṣṭha, 30

kuśaprasū, 210

kuśabhitta, 47, 97

kuśamuṣṭi, 36, 101, 105, 111, 177

kuśara, 58

kuśarajju, 35

kuśala, 40 fn.f.

kuśavāri, 47

kuśavārijala, 47

kuśasūnā, 47, 99

kuśastamba, 49, 97, 101, 106

kuśahasta, 42

kuśā, 29 fn.

kuśāgra, 32, 40, 102

kuśāmbu, 47 fn.

kuśeṇḍu, 34

kuśottara, 33, 103

kuśodaka, 47, 91, 97, 240

kuśorṇa, 49, 97, 100

kūrca, 28, 33, 34, 39, 69, 80 fn., 187, 221,

### XIII

kūrca, 239 fn.

kūsmāṇḍahoma, 67

kṛcchra, 47, 240

kṛtyā, 56, 152

kauśa, 100, 155 fn., 241 fn.

kratu, 58, 64

krumuka, 129

gajāśānti, 85

garta, 174

garbhādhāna, 88

gāyatrī, 229

gārhapatya, 13, 19, 34, 36, 72, 76, 80, 81, 95,

96, 101, 128, 129, 156, 163, 221, 223, 235,

236

gurumuṣṭi, grumuṣṭi, 65, 92

grhamedhin, 215

- godāna, 87, 105  
gopitṛyajña, 25
- gharma, 126, 172  
ghāsa, 139  
ghoṣad, 156 fn.
- caṇḍātaka, 100  
caturhotar, 73  
camasa, 237  
caru, 37, 136  
cāturhautṛka, 74  
cātvāla, 20, 21, 102, 176, 178  
citi, 64 fn.
- jayānya, 137 f.  
jāmi, 36
- tagara, 138  
tambala, 134  
tārpya, 35 fn., 76  
tulī, 92  
tūla, 64  
ṛṇa, II, 36, 37, 40, 41, 50 fn., 66, 80, 86, 93, 94, V (also compounds), 99, 102, 117, 133, 163, 173, 176 fn., 178 fn., 184, 187, 194, 198, 202, 206, 208, 215, 221–223, 241  
ṛṇakūrca, 14  
ṛṇagarbha, 16  
ṛṇacchedana, 102  
ṛṇadhānya(ka), 27  
ṛṇanirasana, 17, 102  
ṛṇapāṇi, 21  
ṛṇapūla, 102  
ṛṇaprāsana, 102  
ṛṇavarra, 96, 102, 171 fn.  
ṛṇaśayin, 102  
ṛṇasaṃvāha, 102  
ṛṇāgra, 24, 102  
ṛṇāda, 102  
ṛṇāntardhāna, 102  
ṛṇāpacayana, 102  
ṛṇodaka, 9  
ṛpā, 35, 36  
tejana, 28, 50, 122, 134, 139 fn.  
tejas, 36, 60 fn., 191, 204, 237  
tridhātu, 144
- dakṣiṇā, 76, 93, 105, 173, 179  
dakṣiṇāgni, 19, 23, 72, 80  
dadhi, 138, 238  
darbha, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 20, 22–25, 27, 29, 30, 32, 38–41, 43, 45–48 fn., IV, V (also compounds), 109, 112, 120, 126, 127, 129, 134, 136, 138, 140, 150, 154, 155, 158, 161, 163, 172, 179 fn., 194, 197, 198, 201, 209, 215, 217, 220, 225, 228 fn., 234, 237–239, 241  
darbhakulāya, 76, 103, 129  
darbhakūrca, 79, 239  
darbhaṇa, 34  
darbhataruṇa(ka), 61, 89, 97, 101  
darbhatṛṇa, 27, 32, 61  
darbhanāḍī, 87, 103  
darbhapavitra, 31, 65, 66, 86, 101  
darbhapuñjila etc., 25, 26, 41, 54, 64 f., 82, 83, 85, 86  
darbhapūla, 103  
darbhamayaṃ barhis, 155  
darbhamuṣṭi, 37, 65, 97, 101, 176, 178, 213  
darbharajju, 56, 92  
darbhavaṭu, 69, 75, 103  
darbhavītā, 99  
darbhaśulba, 56, 103  
darbhastamba, 46, 47, 59, 62, 73, 83, 97, 101, 106  
darbhastambha, 74, 103  
darbhāgra, 93, 102  
darbhāntarhita, 102  
darbhenva, 75  
darbheṣikā, 56, 83  
darbhodaka, 91, 97  
darbolka, -ā, 78, 103  
darvī, 94  
darvīhoma, 81  
daśahotar, 72  
dālbhūṣi, 85  
dīna, 144 fn.  
durbīriṇa, 139 fn.  
dūrvā, 6, 16, 26, 28, 37, 39, 43, 50, 51, 93, 100, VI, 134, 139 fn., 239, 240  
dūrvāgranthi, 104, 120  
dūrvāstamba, 106, 111, 115 fn.  
dūrveṣṭaka, 116  
drum̐bhūlī, 84 f.  
dviḡunabhagna, 39  
dvibarhas, 148 fn.
- dhāman, 179  
dhiṣaṇā, 157  
dhiṣnya, 78  
dhūpatṛṇa, 27  
dhvaja, 45 fn.
- nala, 27, 50, 139  
namovāka, 206 fn.  
navapatrikā, 139 fn.  
nāndī(mukha)śrāddha, 112

nidhana, 160  
 nihnava(na), 213  
 niška, 182  
 nīrājana, 31 fn.  
 nīvi, 164  
 nyagrodha, 24, 30, 89  
  
 pañcagavya, 47 fn., 65, 235, 240  
 patnīsamyāja, 208, 212, 219, 221, 222, 224  
 parigrahaṇīya, 238  
 paridhi, 8, 25, 130, 149 fn., 153, 167, 168,  
 170, 180, 205, 208–210, 214, 215  
 paribhojanī, 153  
 parivāsana, 217 fn.  
 parivāha, 139 fn.  
 parivedana, 131  
 paristarāṇa, 80 fn.  
 paristarāṇakūrca, 237  
 parṇa, 63, 67, 68, 95  
 palada, 12  
 palāśa, 6, 13, 35, 37, 50, 51, 63–65, 67, 68,  
 87, 91, 95, 106, 111, 125, 137  
 pavamāna stotra, 176  
 pavitram, pavitre, 23, 26, 28, 30, 31, 39, 42,  
 47, 54, 65, 66, 75–77, 82, 86 fn., 92, 100,  
 112, 201, 204, 215, 216, 235  
 pavitrapāṇi, 86  
 pākayajña, 80  
 (pālikā), pālikai, 239  
 piñjūla etc., 41 fn., 54 fn., 130  
 piṇḍapitṛyajña, 23, 38, 175  
 punyāha, 70, 86, 109  
 punarabhīśeka, 124  
 punarādhāna, punarādheya, 36, 61, 76, 77,  
 95, 100, 129  
 purīṣa, 72  
 puroḍāś, 141  
 purohita, 118, 119, 141  
 puṣṭi, 161 f.  
 pūjā, 239  
 pūtika, 80  
 pūla, 77  
 pṛṣniparṇi, 109  
 pṛṣṭhyā, 174  
 pracyu-, 193  
 prajanana, prajāti, 165, 210  
 prajāḥ, 12, 179, 186, 199  
 praṇīta (water), 24, 71, 82, 96, 219, 237  
 pratiprasthātar, 18, 65, 79, 210, 212, 219  
 pratiṣṭhā (firm foundation), 20, 22, 67, 81,  
 93, 116, 166, 167, 184–188, 191, 192, 194,  
 204, 205, 208, 220  
 pratisara, 75, 121  
 pradakṣiṇam, 211

prayāja, 188, 190, 191, 203, 204  
 pralava, 127  
 pravargya, 26, 27, 30, 34, 59, 69, 79, 100,  
 112 f., 120, 124, 126–128, 136, 159, 161,  
 173, 184, 220, 222  
 pravṛj-, 128 f., 143  
 pravṛñjana, 128 fn.  
 prasavyam, 211  
 prasū, 210  
 prastara, 7, 8, 12, 15, 18, 19, 25, 40, 66, 81,  
 94, 102, 149 fn., 152, 153, 155, 157–161,  
 167, 168, 170–172, 177–180, 184, 187,  
 195, XI, 221, 239  
 prastotar, 45, 176, 177, 213  
 prāṇa, 108, 117, 186, 201  
 prāṇabhakṣa, 173  
 prāyaṇīya, 181, 218  
 prāyaścitta, -i, 58, 66 fn., 76, 77, 86, 183  
 prāśitra, 71, 173, 194  
 preta, 59  
 prokṣaṇakūrca, 237  
 plakṣa, 62, 89, 90, 170 fn., 196  
  
 phalaçamasa, 32, 104  
 phalavati, 138  
 phālguna, 50, 100  
  
 bandhu, 124, 126, 127  
 barhirmuṣṭi, 213  
 barhīrhoma, 180 f.  
 barhiṣad, 146  
 barhiṣmant, 147  
 barhis, 7, 8, 13, 14, 19, 21–23, 25, 27, 36, 37,  
 41–43, 57, 64, 71, 79, 81, 82, 94, 105, 135,  
 136 fn., X, 198, 199, 206, 209–211, 214–  
 216, 221, 223, 227, 236  
 barhistṛṇa, 163  
 balabbhid, 210  
 bali, 47, 73, 86, 237  
 balbaja, 15, 27, 30, 42, 50, 127, 135 f., 139  
 balbajastukā, 135  
 bahiṣpavamāna, 168, 171, 175, 177–179  
 bāṇa, 125  
 bārhatam, 194  
 bindu, 60  
 bṛṣi, bṛṣi, vṛṣi, 34, 235, XIV  
 bṛhat (sāman), 194  
 bṛhaspatikūrca, 240  
 brahmakūrca, 240  
 brāhman, 44, 50, 60, 64, 67, 74, 91, 103,  
 125, 126 fn., 160, 162  
 brahmān (priest), 17, 68, 69, 71, 75, 79, 82,  
 155, 169, 173, 194, 197, 199, 201, 219,  
 234, 241

- brahmamedha, 50  
 brahmavarcasa, 105  
 brahmāhuti, 48  
 brahmodya, 236  
 brahmaudana, -nika, 72, 78  
  
 bhadra, 132  
 bhadravācyā, 205  
  
 maṇi, 55, 60  
 madhu, 38  
 madhuparka, 237, 238, 240  
 manas, 66, 67  
 mahāpitṛyajña, 168, 191, 211  
 mahāvīra, 30, 126–128, 218–220, 222  
 mahāvedī, 64 fn., 69, 172, 228  
 mahāvrata, 33, 59, 68, 75, 124, 125, 127,  
 234, 241, 242  
 māsara, 68  
 mithuna (tva), 165 f., 176, 191, 200, 227  
 muñja, 15, 27, 28, 30, 33, 42, 49, 50, 58, 72,  
 75 f., 108 fn., VII, 133, 134, 136, 139 fn.,  
 219 fn., 220, 222, 235  
 muñjakulāya, 76, 129  
 muñjanejanam, 138  
 muñjarajju, 34  
 mutava, 27, 50, 139  
 mūṭakaṭa, 133  
 mūṭapa, 139 fn.  
 mūrvā, 139  
 mṛtyuñjaya, 110  
 medhājanana, 50, 106  
 medhya, 65, 66, 77, 151, 167, 169  
 mauñjapraśna, 130  
  
 yajamāna, see patron  
 yajamānamuṣṭi, 155  
 yajña, 217  
 yajñapuruṣa, 200  
 yajñavāstu, 31  
 yajñopavīta, 30, 42, 43, 46  
 yava, 72 fn.  
 yaśas, 237  
 yaśtikākarṣaṇa, 35  
 yūpa, 34 fn., 36, 57 fn., 93, 104, 167, 175,  
 196, 209  
 yoni, 123, 124, 161  
  
 rakṣas, 17, 157, 159  
 rajju, 160  
 rajjudāman, 126  
 rarāṭhya, 139  
 raśanā, 35, 49, 126  
 rasa, 58, 59, 108, 167  
  
 rājasūya, 38, 53, 66, 87, 106, 239  
 rāsnā, 160, 161  
 retas, 46  
  
 lakṣaṇa, 30  
 lamajja, 239  
 lava, 32 fn.  
 loka, 13, 188, 203, 204, 225, 226, 229  
 loṣṭaciti, 37  
  
 vajra, 12 f., 123, 167, 171, 190  
 vapā, 82, 94  
 varaṇa, 125, 235  
 varuṇapraghāsa, 13, 18 f., 30, 49, 191 fn.,  
 210, 212, 218, 227  
 varcas, 15, 61, 83, 119, 163, 177, 184, 237  
 vallī, 241  
 vaśāsamana, 82, 88  
 vāja, 77, 90, 186, 204, 223  
 vājapeya, 35, 42, 77, 97  
 vājīn, 89, 186  
 vāstuśamana, 65, 83, 106  
 vid-, 224 ff.  
 vidhṛti, 7 f., 25, 81, 94, 167, 168, 170, 171,  
 202, 204, 206, 210, 211  
 viś, 202  
 viśākha, 93, 198  
 viṣṭara, 33 fn., 85, 172, 215, 233  
 viṣṇukrānta, 109  
 visūrmika, 76  
 vihāra, 95  
 vīraṇa, vīrina, 27, 39, 137 ff.  
 vīrya, 46, 59, 62, 78, 199, 200, 223  
 vṛkta, 144 fn.  
 vṛktabarhis, 147  
 vṛj-, vṛñje, 142, 144  
 vetasa, 125  
 vedā, 12, 18, 20, 25, 30, 64, 81, 155, 208,  
 XII  
 vedatṛṇa, 18, 208, 223  
 vedaparivāsanāni, 220  
 vedapraravāḥ, 220  
 vedaśiras, 221  
 vedasamavatthadhāni, 220 fn.  
 vedi, 7, 8, 12, 14, 19, 21–25, 39, 54, 78, 81,  
 84, 93, 104, 143 fn., 144, 150, 153–157,  
 163, 164, 167–171, 173, 175, 176, 180–  
 185, 187, 188, 196, 198, 199, 201–204,  
 210, 213–215, 217, 218, 223, 225 ff.  
 veditṛṇa, 176  
 vedopagrahaṇam, 219  
 vedopayāma, 219  
 vaiśvadeva, 40, 186  
 vrata, 125, 156



śakti, 238  
 śatābhīṣeka, 235  
 śam, 213 fn.  
 śamitar, 90  
 śamī, 34, 39, 63–65, 109, 111, 138  
 śara, 6, 28, 50, 57, 123 f., 132, 139, 171, 183  
 śaramaya, 139 fn.  
 śareṣīka, 83, 103  
 śalāka, 78, 79  
 śaṣpāpavitra, 212 fn.  
 śākhāpavitra, 67, 68, 87, 206  
 śānta, 53, 109, 118  
 śānti, 31 fn., 41, 59, 86, 104, 109, 111, 118  
 śāntīhoma, 37  
 śāntyudaka, 31, 56, 109  
 śālā, 120  
 śikya, 127  
 śikhā, 221  
 śithilī, 109  
 śirīṣa, 138  
 śiroveṣṭa, 48 fn.  
 śīrya, 50, 139  
 śuklaprasūta, 137  
 śuṅṭha, 27, 28, 50, 139  
 śūka, 50  
 śūkatṛṇa, 139  
 śūci, 82  
 śūrpa, 30  
 śūlagava, 92, 99, 105, 237  
 śūṣa, 139 fn.  
 śmaśāna, 152  
 śmaśānaciti, 125, 127  
 śyāmāka, 50, 139 fn.  
 śyenaḥṛta, 100  
 śraddhā, 221  
 śrāvāṇakarma, 32  
 śrāddha, 33 fn., 38, 47, 50, 70, 71, 86, 98 fn.,  
 134, 173  
 śrāmaṇaka, 98  
 śrī, 221  
 saṃsthā, 206 fn.  
 sakṛdacchinna, 38  
 sadas, 17, 167, 174, 176  
 sadhis, 148  
 saṃnakham, 198  
 sabhā, 109  
 samaya, 113  
 samidh, 109, 190

saṃpad, 31  
 saṃpāta, 58  
 saṃmārga(ṭṛṇa), 11 f.  
 saṃmārgāḥ, 11  
 saṃmārjanāni, 25  
 sarpaṇa, 173, 178, 179  
 sarpabali, 119  
 sarparājñī, 81  
 sarva(m), 115  
 saha, 53  
 sahas, 19  
 sākamedha, 8, 38, 168, 169, 191, 197, 211  
 sāṃnāyya, 68, 161, 207  
 sāman, 86, 129, 176, 178  
 sāvitṛī, 85, 234  
 sikatā, 27  
 śimantonayana, 40, 82, 98, 104, 105  
 śīra, 139 fn.  
 sukṛtasya loke, 203  
 subarhis, 153  
 surā, 210  
 sūkatṛṇa, 27  
 sūktavāka, 206, 207, 211, 212  
 sūdahoma, 37  
 soma, 8, 14, 18, 26, 30–32, 47 fn., 50, 53, 55,  
 78, 80, 85, 89, 91, 94, 95, 103, 105, 119,  
 120, 126, 138, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147,  
 153, 160, 162, 163, 169, 170, 171, 173,  
 175, 212  
 sautrāmaṇī, 124, 154, 183, 189, 192  
 stamba, 25, 37, 47, 58  
 stambayajus, 84, 155, 226  
 stupa, 158, 187, 199, 200, 202, 221  
 sthaṇḍila, 35 fn., 86 fn., 121, 173, 216  
 snātaka, 15, 43, 69  
 svagākaroti, -kṛta, 204 fn., 214  
 svadhā, 157  
 svayamātrṇa, 115–117  
 svayamḍinam, 183  
 svasti, 218  
 hiranyagarbha, 60  
 hotar, 12, 16 f., 19, 23, 68, 75, 127, 140–142,  
 153, 155, 168 f., 172, 173, 181, 188, 192,  
 197, 205 f., 207, 212, 218, 222, 226, 227,  
 232, 234, 235, 241, 242  
 hotraka, 233, 234, 241  
 Avestan barəsman, 149 fn., 241 fn.  
 Avestan barəziš, 148

INDEX OF SANSKRIT TEXT-PLACES

AVPar.	5, 2, 5	112		19, 11, 11	112
	21, 2, 3	109	ĀśvG.	4, 7, 8	70 f.
	36, 19, 1	110		4, 8, 27	99
AVP.	4, 10, 8	15	ĀśvŚ.	1, 1, 23	169
	5, 1, 3	131 f.		1, 11	223
	8, 11, 1	229		2, 3, 20	39
	20, 34, 4	229		2, 4, 14	236
AVŚ.	1, 11	123	ṚgVidh.	2, 22, 2 ff.	21
	7, 78, 1	130 f.	ṚV.	1, 63, 7	143 fn.
	8, 7, 20	53		1, 142, 5	142
	9, 3, 4	11		1, 161, 8	130
	9, 3, 17	12		1, 162, 8 ff.	14
	10, 4	55 f.		1, 164, 34 f.	228
	11, 6	52 f.		1, 188, 4	142 fn.
	12, 1, 13	229		1, 191	58
	14, 2, 21 ff.	135		2, 3, 4	143
	18, 1, 60	197		3, 2, 6	147, 148 fn.
	19, 28 ff.	55		3, 4, 4	143
	19, 30, 5	60		3, 9, 9	145
	19, 32	53		4, 6, 4	146, 148 fn.
	19, 33	53 f.		4, 38, 10	90
ĀgnG.	2, 7, 11	35		4, 39, 6	89
ĀpG.	2, 1	80		5, 49	21 f.
	4, 5	88		5, 62, 5	144
	4, 8	75		6, 11, 5	143
ĀpŚ.	1, 3, 15 f.	158		6, 48	21
	1, 4, 3 ff.	160		7, 2, 4	143
	1, 6, 4	217 f.		7, 7, 3	143
	1, 7, 3 f.	38		7, 17, 1	146
	2, 8, 3	199		7, 46, 4	144
	2, 15, 1	23		8, 27, 1	147
	2, 18, 3	204		8, 102, 13 f.	144 f.
	4, 5, 5	183		10, 35, 10	142 fn., 148 fn.
	5, 26, 3	76		10, 110, 4	142
	5, 27, 9	81		10, 134, 5	115
	7, 18, 12	82		10, 142, 8	108, 112
	10, 7, 3	83 f.	AiĀ.	5, 1, 3	242
	10, 22, 1	87		5, 1, 4	232
	12, 17, 3 f.	178	AiB.	1, 25, 1	170
	14, 20, 8	91		2, 6, 11	188

	3, 22, 7	18, 20	3, 1, 1	157
	5, 26, 3 ff.	190	3, 2, 2, 7	185
	7, 33	89	3, 2, 2, 8	161
	8, 8	108 fn.	3, 2, 2, 9	163
KG.	43, 4	74 f.	3, 2, 3, 3 f.	68
KS.	9, 16	73	3, 2, 9, 14	165
	25, 2	85	3, 2, 10, 2	166
	25, 5	207	3, 2, 10, 3	167
	29, 3	13 f.	3, 3, 2 ff.	125
	31, 1	163	3, 3, 2, 1	220
KŠ.	1, 3, 12	43, 155 fn.	3, 3, 2, 2	81, 220
	1, 10, 6	219	3, 3, 6, 5 f.	158
	2, 3, 6	24	3, 3, 6, 10	7
	4, 1, 11	38	3, 3, 7, 3	219
	6, 2, 12	36	3, 3, 8, 9	219
	8, 5, 24; 33	175	3, 3, 9, 3	205
	9, 6, 36; 38	45	3, 7, 3, 1 ff.	49
	10, 9, 32	32	3, 7, 4, 12	217 f.
	13, 3, 1	34	3, 7, 6, 7 f.	7 f.
	26, 2, 8	136, 137	3, 7, 6, 13	192 f., 225
Kauš.	7, 21	87	3, 7, 6, 18	182
	13, 11 f.	16	3, 7, 7, 14	228 f.
	18, 32 ff.	68, 94 f.	3, 12, 5, 12	200 fn.
	21, 13 f.	131	TS.	156 ff.
	21, 21 ff.	57 f.	1, 1, 2	82
	26, 2 ff.	130	1, 2, 1, 1	178
	26, 30	75	1, 7, 6, 7	206 f.
	32, 3 f.	130 f.	2, 6, 5, 3 ff.	184
	33, 1 ff.	122 f.	3, 4, 8, 6	17 f.
	35, 24	131	3, 7, 6, 1	37
	46, 26 ff.	131	5, 2, 8, 3	93
	78, 1 ff.	135 f.	5, 4, 5, 2	92
KaušU.	2, 15	12	5, 6, 4, 1 f.	62
KB.	3, 12, 13 ff.	222	6, 1, 1, 7	60
	6, 13	17	6, 1, 5, 5	167
	12, 2	170	6, 1, 7, 1	87
	18, 8	26	6, 2, 2, 7	161
GG.	1, 5, 17	38	6, 2, 4, 3	84 f.
	1, 6, 21	75	6, 2, 11, 3	186
	4, 7, 9 ff.	63	6, 3, 1, 1 f.	178
ChU.	5, 18	187	6, 3, 3, 2	36
JB.	1, 82 f.	179	6, 3, 4, 9	214
	1, 86	179 f.	6, 3, 5, 1 ff.	78
	1, 202	16	6, 3, 8, 2 f.	14
	2, 100	99, 100	6, 6, 3, 2	184
TĀ.	3, 8, 1 f.	170	PB.	1, 1, 7
	10, 1, 7	115	5, 5, 11 f.	34, 234, 235
TB.	1, 1, 9, 4 f.	199 f.	6, 7, 10	213 fn.
	1, 6, 8, 8	211	6, 7, 17 f.	178
	1, 7, 1, 4; 6 f.	199	21, 3, 3 ff.	88 f.
	2, 2, 1, 1 ff.	72 f.	Parāśaras.	9, 34
	2, 2, 8, 1	136 f.	PG.	3, 7, 3
	2, 6, 4, 5	187	BĀU.	6, 4, 3
	2, 7, 17, 3	62	BGP.	1, 3, 7
				67

BGŚ.	1, 6, 2	79 f.		19, 16	216
	1, 7, 1	81 f.	Vṛddha-		
	1, 20, 7	111	harīta	7, 14	99, 106
	1, 22	16	VaikhG.	1, 10	69 f.
	3, 1, 2 ff.	45 f.		1, 11	237
	5, 4, 1	114		3, 12	98
BG.	1, 1, 23	88		5, 2	77
	3, 9, 1 ff.	90 f.		5, 4	221
	4, 2, 1	232		5, 6	92
BŚ.	1, 2	163	VaitS.	10, 7	151
	1, 21	180	ŚB.	1, 1, 3, 5	31
	3, 1	76, 129		1, 2, 4, 15	14
	5, 7	218		1, 2, 5, 26	184
	6, 12	167		1, 3, 1, 11	20
	6, 25	34		1, 3, 3, 1 ff.	164
	7, 8	175		1, 3, 3, 7	187
	8, 15	85		1, 3, 4, 10	7
	9, 1	26, 120		1, 5, 1, 23	16 f.
	9, 5	218 f.		1, 8, 3, 16	18
	10, 24	112		1, 9, 2, 16 f.	18
	20, 16	72		1, 9, 2, 29	180
BrPur.	219, 54	39		2, 2, 2, 13	13
BhG.	1, 27	112		2, 4, 2, 17	38
BhŚ.	2, 14, 8	23		2, 4, 4, 24	227
	3, 7, 8	219		2, 5, 2, 42 ff.	18 f.
	7, 9, 12	78		2, 6, 1, 14	211
MG.	1, 11, 6	56 f.		2, 6, 1, 45	211
MŚ.	1, 1, 1, 42	160		3, 4, 3, 22	212
	1, 1, 3, 1 ff.	218		3, 6, 3, 10	181
	1, 2, 5, 2	220		3, 6, 4, 10	82
	1, 3, 5, 26	181 f.		3, 7, 3, 8	11
	1, 5, 3, 1	128		3, 8, 2, 15	20
	1, 8, 3, 2 f.	82		3, 8, 3, 10 ff.	62 f.
	1, 8, 4, 7	82		3, 9, 4, 17	15
	2, 5, 4, 10	26		4, 2, 5, 3 ff.	21
	6, 1, 3, 23	128		6, 3, 1, 2	124
	6, 1, 5, 33 f.	46		6, 5, 2, 11	161
MS.	2, 11, 5	156		6, 5, 2, 13	160
	3, 1, 5	72		6, 6, 1, 23	129
	3, 9, 4	214		7, 2, 3, 2	68
	4, 13, 8	192 f.		9, 2, 1, 12	65
LŚ.	1, 12, 2	177		11, 4, 1, 14	186 f.
	2, 1, 6	17		13, 1, 6, 1	166
	2, 7, 20	93		13, 8, 1, 15	139
	4, 9, 16 ff.	17		14, 6, 11, 1	232
VS.	5, 2	78	ŚG.	2, 7, 5	33
	10, 32	154		2, 7, 6 f.	43, 44
	18, 63	180		2, 7, 28	43; 45
	21, 57	153		4, 6, 6	44
	28, 12	154		6, 3, 7 f.	119
	28, 21	153 f.	ŚŚ.	1, 6, 6 ff.	17
VādhS.	3, 24	13		4, 21, 2	233
VāsDh.	4, 14	216		8, 9, 2	26
	21, 1	137		16, 12, 20	35 f.
ViS.	9, 1 ff.	113	HG.	2, 18, 9	90 f.