

whose deeds are narrated as if they were the deeds of gods or Asuras.¹⁷ They are typified by a particular group of seven,¹⁸ mentioned four times in the R̥gveda,¹⁹ several times in the later Saṃhitās,²⁰ and enumerated in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad²¹ as Gotama, Bharadvāja, Viśvāmitra, Jamadagni, Vasiṣṭha, Kaśyapa, and Atri. In the R̥gveda itself Kutsa,²² Atri,²³ Rebha,²⁴ Agastya,²⁵ the Kuśikas,²⁶ Vasiṣṭha,²⁷ Vyaśva,²⁸ and others appear as R̥sis; and the Atharvaveda²⁹ contains a long list, including Āngiras, Agasti, Jamadagni, Atri, Kaśyapa, Vasiṣṭha, Bharadvāja, Gaviṣṭhira, Viśvāmitra, Kutsa, Kakṣivant, Kaṇva, Medhātithi, Triśoka, Uśanā Kāvya, Gotama, and Mudgala.

Competition among the bards appears to have been known. This is one of the sides of the riddle poetry (**Brahmodya**) that forms a distinctive feature³⁰ of the Vedic ritual of the Aśvamedha, or horse sacrifice. In the Upaniṣad period such competitions were quite frequent. The most famous was that of Yājñavalkya, which was held at the court of Janaka of Videha, as detailed in the Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad,³¹ and which was a source of annoyance to **Ajātasatru** of **Kāśī**.³² According to an analogous practice, a Brāhmaṇa, like **Uddālaka Aruṇi**, would go about disputing with all he came across, and compete with them for a prize of money.³³

¹⁷ Aitareya Brāhmaṇa, i. 17; ii. 19; Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, i. 6, 2, 7, etc.

¹⁸ Cf. *Indische Studien*, 8, 167.

¹⁹ iv. 42, 8; x. 109, 4; 130, 7; Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 144.

²⁰ Vājasaneyi Saṃhitā, xiv. 24; Av. xi. 1, 1. 24; xii. 1, 39, etc.

²¹ ii. 2, 6.

²² i. 106, 6.

²³ i. 117, 3.

²⁴ i. 117, 4.

²⁵ i. 179, 6.

²⁶ iii. 53, 10.

²⁷ vii. 33, 13.

²⁸ viii. 23, 16.

²⁹ iv. 29. Cf. xviii. 3, 15, 16.

³⁰ Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 345, 346; Bloomfield, *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 15, 172; *Religion des Veda*, 216 et seq.

³¹ iii. 1, 1 et seq.

³² *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, ii. 1, 1 et seq.; *Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad*, iv. 1 et seq.

³³ *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, xi. 4, 1, 1 et seq.; *Gopatha Brāhmaṇa*, i. 3, 8 et seq.; Geldner, *Vedische Studien*, 2, 185, 344.

Cf. Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 340-347; Muir, *Sanskrit Texts*, 3, 120 et seq.

R̥sis.—The term 'Seven R̥sis' denotes the 'Great Bear' (see i. **Rkṣa**) in one passage of the R̥gveda,¹ and occasionally

¹ x. 82, 2.