

victim, is not clear.<sup>10</sup> The Atharvaveda<sup>11</sup> refers to the Stena and the Taskara as cattle and horse thieves.<sup>12</sup>

Tāyu was another name for thief, perhaps of a less distinguished and more domestic character than the highwayman, for though he is referred to as a cattle-thief,<sup>13</sup> he is also alluded to as a stealer of clothes (*vastra-mathi*)<sup>14</sup> and as a debtor.<sup>15</sup> In one passage the Tāyus are said to disappear at the coming of dawn (which is elsewhere called *yāvayad-dveṣas*, 'driving away hostile beings,' and *ṛta-pā*, 'guardian of order'), like the stars of heaven (*nakṣatra*).<sup>16</sup>

In the Śatarudriya litany of the Vājasaneyi Samhitā<sup>17</sup> Rudra is called lord of assailers (*ā-vyāddhin*), thieves (*stena*), robbers (*taskara*), pickpockets (*stāyu*), stealers (*muṣṇant*), and cutters (*vi-krnta*); and designations of sharpers (*grtsa*) and bands (*gaṇa*, *vrāta*), apparently of robbers, are mentioned.<sup>18</sup> It is therefore not surprising that the Rigveda<sup>19</sup> should contain many prayers for safety at home or on the way, or that the Atharvaveda should devote several hymns to night<sup>20</sup> chiefly for protection against the evil doings of thieves and robbers.

Pischel<sup>21</sup> suggests that in one passage of the Rigveda<sup>22</sup> Vasistha is represented as a burglar, but he admits that, since Vasistha was attacking the house of his father Varuṇa, he was only seeking to obtain what he may have regarded as his own. But the interpretation of the hymn is not certain.<sup>23</sup>

Sāyaṇa's explanation of one passage of the Rigveda,<sup>24</sup> as

<sup>10</sup> Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 178, n.

<sup>11</sup> xix. 50, 5. Cf. Rv. x. 97, 10 (*stena*).

<sup>12</sup> Whitney, Translation of the Atharvaveda, 984.

<sup>13</sup> Rv. i. 65, 1; vii. 86, 5.

<sup>14</sup> Rv. iv. 38, 5.

<sup>15</sup> Rv. vi. 12, 5. No doubt this theft is the result of despair at being in debt, which might lead to loss of liberty (*Rpa*).

<sup>16</sup> Rv. i. 50, 2. Cf. Macdonell, *Vedic Mythology*, p. 47.

<sup>17</sup> xvi. 20, 21. Cf. Taittirīya Samhitā, iv. 5, 4, 1; Kāthaka Samhitā, xvii. 13; Maitrāyaṇī Samhitā, ii. 9, 4.

<sup>18</sup> xvi. 25.

<sup>19</sup> i. 129, 9; ii. 23, 16; vi. 24, 10; 41, 5; 51, 15; x. 63, 16.

<sup>20</sup> Av. xix. 47-50.

<sup>21</sup> *Vedische Studien*, 2, 55, 56. Contrast I, 106.

<sup>22</sup> Rv. vii. 55.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Aufrecht, *Indische Studien*, 4, 337 et seq.; Lanman, *Sanskrit Reader*, 370; Zimmer, *Altindisches Leben*, 308; Bṛhaddevatā, vii. 11 et seq., with Macdonell's notes.

<sup>24</sup> vi. 54, 1.